



With the Compliments of the Author,
T. HUGHES, S. J.

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THE
ACOLYTE:

OR,

A CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR.

T. Hughes, S. J.

A Story for Catholic Youth.

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TO THE
ACOLYTHICAL SOCIETY
OF
St. Xavier's Church, Cincinnati,
THE MEMBERS OF WHICH
CHARMED US BY THEIR MANNERS
WARMED US WITH THEIR DEVOTION,
AND REFRESH US STILL WITH THEIR MEMORY
THE FOLLOWING PAGES,
SUGGESTED IN THEIR MIDST,
ARE RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

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PREFACE.

THIS book lays no claim to a place among sensational stories. Nor does it aspire to be one of those feasts of fancy which are celebrated in the temple of fame. Nor does it indulge in the flow of soul, which language, no less than music, can at times breathe forth. It desires only to put forward an idea.

An idea embodied in the life of a youth, a beauty bodied forth in his words, and a truth in his deeds, may perhaps succeed in striking the minds of the young: a seed may be sown to develop elsewhere a similar growth. We know that an idea is stronger than armies: it breaks up from within the soil of the mind which entertains it, and puts forth exuberance of flowers and fruit. For the rest, all the force and pomp and circumstance of outward life might press upon the soul, and only

trample it into the semblance of a common highway, hard and barren, without a single perfume shed round about its existence.

The idea set forth here is that of a Christian Scholar. And, for the purpose, we have taken the example of one out of many engaging students, who once riveted our attention, while they served in the sanctuary of a College Church. As it is with their successors, who serve the same altar, so it was with them—the modesty which they showed was so uncommon, the grace of their presence, and the atmosphere around them so charming, that we were bound in a spell of admiration. So we make an example of one of them, for the sake of the truth and virtue, which had already made of him their abode.

These pages, now revised, first appeared in the "Messenger of the Sacred Heart," the organ of devotion to the Adorable Heart of Our Lord. While no apology need be made for the truths conveyed, indulgence is asked for such shortcomings as deface the style.



THE ACOLYTE;

OR, A CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR.

I.

THE COLLEGE BOY.

IT was an evening in March. The last rays of a bright but cold wintry sun were stretching through the old chapel windows and painting a few passing streaks upon the altar. Over the altar hung a picture; and upon this, too, the golden streaks paused, quivering.

A youth entered the sacred precincts, genuflected to the Blessed Sacrament, and knelt down to pray. He was a youth whose appearance betokened him to be upon the threshold of manhood. His posture was devout; his eyes cast down; and he recited

a fervent prayer. Then he looked up to the altar. The trembling rays were just on the centre of that picture,—just where there was painted a Heart, and over the Heart a semblance of fire or flames, as it were, issuing forth; and, when he looked up, the flames were catching the sun-ray, and seemed themselves to quiver and break forth in real earnest from that crimson Heart. It was the very picture of life and love. It was the revealed Heart of our Divine Lord who stood there lovingly and offered it to the adorer, with a gesture of kindest affection.

The youth's attention was arrested. He gazed intently, and, as he gazed, he distinguished how that jet of flames was gushing forth from a wound in the Heart,—from "the holes in the rock," from "the ruins in the wall." All was bright there to his eye; and the vision warmed his imagination, setting his fancy in a glow. He was carried back, in a whirl of thought, to some incidents which had taken place a few days previously.

On an evening similar to this, he had been boating with a party of companions. On returning, they laid aside their oars, and suffered the boat to glide along on the bosom of the swift current. Noiselessly she was

borne down between the wooded banks; and the stillness all around in the calm air of eventide, broken only now and then by a chirrup or a warble, came upon the spirit of our young friend like a delicious balm. He looked around through the leafless trees towards the golden west. The sun was setting, red as crimson, and swollen to nearly double its size. He turned around in his seat to enjoy the sight. The trees intercepted his view, but only for passing moments; the crimson orb shone out from among the trunks and limbs, and, if lost for a moment, shone out again. But, if it shone out for a moment, it was lost again; and, whenever it was lost, it cast a shadow over him. He was not conscious of that, but still gazed wistfully; till his companions, interested by the interest which he betrayed, looked at the sun and looked at him. Of the two, they thought him not the less worthy of being looked at; for one remarked that "he was seeing visions;" another wittily enough, that "he was in bad humor—so many clouds passed over his face!"

But how glorious was that setting sun! He is reminded of it now by the Heart of Our Divine Lord. How strangely varied

were those shadows, numerous and ever-changing on the crimson-tinged surface of the waters! He knows not at this moment, while he kneels before the picture, that his own life is destined to be, for some short space at least, the chequered subject of shadows strangely varied. Those were cast on the waters by the same glorious sun which cast the beams of light: these are to be projected on him, in no small degree, by yonder Sacred Heart, whence now are issuing those brilliant flames of love. He does not know this yet; but so it is. For, so it is, he must glide along during a certain space of time over the waters of life; and he will suffer his youthful view to rest and his warm devotion to spend itself upon the Heart of his Lord. So it is,—certain created things will come between, like trunks of trees,—like stocks,—like “worse than senseless things,” shutting out God from his view, and casting himself into shade. And it must happen that the gloom and the shade and the overcasting of his soul shall, in the end, either deepen into total shadow or brighten into unobstructed light. Which of the two was the issue with him? The following were the circumstances of his case.



II.

THE YOUTHFUL ACOLYTE.

THE youth whom we have introduced, and whose name was Charles Desmond, broke from his reverie. The dusk had thrown a shroud over the altar; and it would have cast the picture likewise into darkness, but that the sanctuary flame, which ever bears witness to the Sacramental Presence, stood hard by and lent its brightness to that painted emblem of "The Brightness of Eternal Light." An aspiration—"O Sacred Heart of Jesus, I implore, that I may love Thee ever more and more!"—a genuflection, devout and almost lingering—and Charles left the chapel.

His day's work in class was just over. This was his evening visit to the Blessed Sacrament before returning home. However, to-day, he did not go home straight; for the morrow was a feast-day, that of the Annunciation. So, passing over from that

gray old chapel into the adjoining church, he took his place among those who waited at one of the confessionals; and he prepared for Confession. Twenty minutes later, he came forth from the sacred tribunal, betook himself to another portion of the church, in front of the high altar, and prayed awhile.

His lips stopped moving; his thoughts were taking a tumble; his eyes were fixed in vacancy. On a sudden, he started, as though abruptly accosted by some one; it was a thing that had sprung up before him,—a thought,—an unwelcome visitor among his other thoughts. He directed towards the Tabernacle an excited look, not easy for a casual observer to describe; his eyebrows were partly raised, partly knit, as if anger and alarm were dividing his heart within. He seated himself with a quick impulse, and brushed his knees with his hands. He was in some troublesome association, of which he thus tried to rid himself. Nevertheless, uneasiness still clouded his brow, until, reflecting on the morrow's feast, he brightened up, and, looking again at the altar, he said almost aloud:

“To-morrow—my turn to be acolyte in the sanctuary!”

This thought clearly relieved him; for, seizing upon his imagination, it brought before him other scenes, of a kind which he liked. His fancy travelled beyond bounds once more, and it led him from his present place and occupation to recollections of a little while before.

The first recollection was that of a Heart, quivering and living, seen through creatures,—seen through the openings of trees and branches,—discerned through the avenues that admit some rays of a higher world upon the waters of life—discerned through the gifts of grace, through the moments of silent thought, through the odd reflections which open a flood of light upon the soul and set it right down under the eye of God; in spite of the branching maze between the soul and God;—in spite of the sayings and doings, the thoughts and things, that crowd between the creature and the Creator. His first recollection was that of a Heart, seen burning towards him from the far off distance,—seen through all this crowded medium, as through a woodland on the shore of life's stream.

Onward still his fancy led. He was seated in his class-room; and his whole mind and soul became wrapt up in the lessons of these

last few days. He was a boy-philosopher, just now picking of the abundance that great minds had stored up before him.

The garner from which he was gathering was of the inexhaustible field, known as the question of Free Will. This subject interested him. It instinctively connected itself with something that was in him just then. This something was a new thing that had taken up its dwelling with him,—a new thing, in a guise unfamiliar and of an aspect not agreeable. This new thing was a state of mind, or rather of heart; and this state was betraying itself pretty constantly by a set of emotions and feelings, which, like the serpent's tail, indicated a serpent's fangs somewhere hidden within. It was with the fact of these emotions being within him, that the doctrine of Free Will instinctively connected itself, to explain them. The feelings were themselves startling, embarrassing, upsetting the even balance of his usual demeanor. The explanation which "Free Will" gave of them was still more startling, more embarrassing, more distressing to the evenness of his simple-minded soul. The explanation was this:—that he was responsible before God; man's free acts had the character of

responsibility. The ingenuous youth forgot to ask himself whether he was free in the matter of these emotions; he took it for granted that he was. And understanding, as he already did by sad experience, that he was sailing over stormy waters, where winds blew and washed his little bark with foam, he now understood, by still sadder theory, that, when winds and waves rise suddenly up below, thunder and lightning will not long be wanting above. Imagine him responsible, blamable for all those—guilty of all those crowding——!

His was a conscience of a delicate sort. Each time these questionable things arose, he felt a sting. His was a conscience at that moment, his a human heart, which was sorely pricked, pressed round, as it were, with many thorns, just like the Divine Heart that a moment before had risen into view and now rose again. Beautiful, consoling vision!

But time passed: many minutes ago he had finished the penance imposed by his confessor; he was forgetting himself. He knelt down, thanked God, saying his usual little prayer: "In Thee, my God, and for Thee, and from Thee, and with Thee; in the most Sacred Hearts of Jesus and of Mary!" He

rose and went down the church. As he came close to the holy-water font, another young man and fellow-student of his drew near at the same moment, from a different quarter of the church; he too had approached the holy Sacrament of Penance. They recognized one another with a slight nod of Christian charity, and went out of the porch side by side.

"An acolyte to-morrow!" Such was the reflection which had started the youth's fancy; and what an effect it had thereby produced! It warmed a heart which at the moment was cold. Out of it a virtue went forth and strengthened him. For there is such a virtue going forth, not only from Him, whose garments, as he walked through Judea, were touched by the weak and the infirm, but also from whatever is His, though it be but a thought about Him. And such was the thought: "I'll be an acolyte to-morrow;" for this spoke of service, of ministry unto His Sacred Person, in His personal residence upon the altar.

Charles Desmond was wont to serve as acolyte. Picture him in the flowing cassock and ever-graceful surplice, kneeling on the altar-steps, his hands devoutly joined upon

that snow-white vesture, his eyes cast down, the bloom of fairest youth upon his cheek, and the gravity of a Christian man in his posture. What kind of a heart is it that is beating under that surplice,—does it correspond to the outward form which meets our eyes? Observe him in his ordinary life. Life is action proceeding from the heart. Does his life correspond to that exterior? If so, then does his heart likewise. And, as a matter of fact, his favorite resort heretofore has been none other than the Blessed Sacrament; his talk not unconstrained, yet not light nor trivial; his thoughts, as otherwise shown than by his talk, are ever high. Young, frail though he may be, (the sequel will show,) he reminds one of that which is said: "All our conversation is in heaven." Suppose that he be proved sterling, real gold, in the midst of this adulterated nineteenth-century currency,—there, right before our eyes, a model of innocence walking in flesh and blood,—suppose him to be proved thus, and who will face the living reality and not have a feeling come on him, and come over him, and cover him from head to foot, yes, and make his eyelids heavy and his heart sick. For the sight of such a flower makes the

consciousness of ugliness and of sinfulness grow in the beholder, with an expression such as this:

"Where are the days of my youth? Alas! alas! Where are they?"

And if he find that they are no more and nowhere perhaps, save in the book of awful responsibilities to Divine Justice, nature, or it may be grace, weeps tears of compunction and refuses to be consoled, "for they are no more!"

"Those are precious drops!"





III.

THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER.

"JAMES," said Charles Desmond to his companion, when they reached the street, "could you call over at our house, some time. There are some of our questions that I do not understand well. I should like to discuss with you the class matter of these last few days. Will you come, some evening?"

"Certainly, Charlie," answered the other. "This very evening is free; for to-morrow we shall have no school. In an hour or so from this, I shall drop in."

"Well, come along with me at once, and take tea with us. You will not then have to go home twice."

"Thank you, Charlie; but I must see the folks at home first, and tell them how I am going to spend the evening. They would be uneasy otherwise." The two friends

stopped at a certain corner. "Till then, good-bye," resumed James, with a slight wave of the hand.

"You are very kind," responded Charles; and they went opposite ways.

It was the temporary parting of two who went opposite ways in many things, but not in virtue. Charles was delicate in body and mind. James was hardy in both; careless of many little social respects which society oftentimes makes so many bonds of mere tyranny, he was eminently off-hand and outspoken in his dealings with others; and this character made him very acceptable with the mother of Charles Desmond. She saw in him much that her own delicate-minded son might lean upon; and in this one matter, that James could take an independent common-sense view of things and act independently, she thought him, even with her maternal view of things, somewhat superior to her own Charles. She coveted his influence over her own son, and was glad to see him at her house.

Charles had not gone far, when he was accosted from behind:

"Hallo! Charlie."

The youth thus addressed recognized the

voice, almost before turning round. It was his brother.

"Good evening, Edward. Ah! this," saluting Edward's companion with politeness, "this is our friend, Mr. Galveston.

"Mr. Galveston," rejoined Edward, "you remember my brother Charlie. He was at home, along with sister Emily, that night I introduced you, last summer."

"I remember perfectly," answered the friend, who had already shaken hands with Charles; "it was just before you and I went to Europe." They all went on together.

"You are going home at once," said Edward to his younger brother. "We shall be after you in a trice; we turn down this way, and will not be late for tea. By-bye for the present."

"For the present," responded Charles; and they separated.

In a few minutes more, the youth was at home, and as he passed by the parlors he looked in on either side. He stopped and entered one, in which he found the object of his search;—his mother was there engaged in needle-work. She had heard his rap, and wheeling round from the end of the sofa, on which she was seated, a little square ottoman,

she placed it before her. As the well-known face peered through the doorway, she returned his smile and his greeting, at the same time pulling the ottoman a little nearer to herself and motioning him to be seated. This was his usual seat, as well when he read for her, while she plied the needle, as when she conversed with him and opened her dear motherly heart. Such was her wont, particularly after comforting herself with her favorite book, a devout one of St. Francis de Sales.

"Late to-night," she remarked.

"Yes, mother; to-morrow will be the feast of the Annunciation."

"You have been to Confession, then. Thank God, my dearest Charles." Her look was peculiarly tender, as she said this. "Just now, I was thinking of to-morrow's feast, and I wish I were as good a mother as Mary."

The youth laughed lightly, with an ejaculation, "Oh, mamma!" He did not care to contrast one mother with the other; he enjoyed both.

"Yes, Charles," resumed his mother, "I shall go to Communion with you to-morrow. You pray for me?"

"Dear me, yes, mamma! I shall offer up my Communion for you." The boy's face was bright; there was nothing affected, nothing "put on," in his earnest expression of this offer, as of a really good gift to his mother.

The latter was deeply moved. She reflected on herself, and on her happiness in possessing such a son. He had ever been a darling object, dear enough in his infancy, when she had borne him; still dearer now that she had bred him and seen him grow day by day in stature, manliness and virtue. His features, ever fair, were of themselves a silent recommendation.

But, heretofore, his had been the wax-like beauty of childhood. Now,—his mother had already observed it,—an air of pensiveness began to sit upon his brow, removing the calm, cloudless, and, perhaps, less impressive smoothness of earlier years. Recollections, with their deepening shadows, seemed now as if being pent up in that bright blue eye, taking from its brilliancy, though adding, it is true, to the depth of life behind. The surface of childhood was changing into the depth of manhood; something was lost to the outward feature indeed, but it was not

lost to the feature as index of the inward soul. The traits obscured by his pensiveness were more than supplied by expressiveness; just as, at times, it happens that a total absence of external comeliness is wonderfully made up for by a certain richness of soul that teems through the countenance. But whatever it was that had settled in the soul of Charles and appeared in his face, it was clearly something in the way of a cloud; perhaps it was a spring cloud, soon to pass. If so, it was not the less dark on that account; rather the more so, in as much as all before had been so bright.

The mother thought it flitted; and it was beautiful in its effects. Yet it caused a flutter in her heart to notice in him, at chance moments, a sudden start, an abstractedness from present intercourse, a quick meaningless motion of the hand, a fidgetiness; and "he would pass his hand over his brow, or brush back his hair from his forehead hastily, —things little in themselves, but much in connection," as the mother wisely remarked at a later period; and she was right, for they were much in connection,—much, as contrasted with his former habits of sedate modesty,—much, as taken for signs of something

else. The cloud seemed to thicken as time advanced.

At the present moment the boy's face was serene; yet the mother's thoughts led her to the question which she had resolved upon before.

"Charles," she inquired, in a tone of earnestness, "are you quite happy, these times? The thought came to me more than once that something disturbed you."

Charles looked her full in the face. He sat below her; and his eyes opening upwards, and directed full at hers, fascinated her with their large round fulness, but still more with the plenitude of child-like openness displayed.

"Of course, mamma, I am contented."

"Who taught you to frown?"

"Do I?"

"Several times, of late, I believed you did."

The boy put down his head. His own self came before him; and a wonderful self it had begun to appear. He did not know what to make of it. And his mother's question was just now probing that very self.

"I don't know, mother, how things are. They are strange. Now I am one thing, then another. I don't know what is moving me."

"What do you mean, child?"

"There is something in me that moves my heart."

He looked up, and there was something almost piteous in the touch of distress that stood now and began to sparkle in those eyes—bright enough of themselves without need of a tear to make them brighter. The mother impulsively dropped her work to lay her hand upon the boy's arm, and she bent forward to catch every word he uttered. He continued slowly:

"I am flighty, troubled and fidgety. I go"—he hesitated,—“I go to visit the Blessed Sacrament, and I feel relieved; but, when I come away, I am again as before. I take up one thing—another; nothing in philosophy agrees with me well but what finds an echo in my own breast. There is something——” He shook his head in perplexity, looked sad and stopped.

Still more perplexed was the mother. She had not dreamt of such an incoherent world within him as his incoherent speech and strangeness of manner both evidenced. She could not, indeed, help feeling a momentary satisfaction at the revelation just made of his interior life, with the Blessed Sacrament for

its centre; but the predominant sentiment left by his words was anxiety.

He had evidently felt that there was something within him which just answered to his mother's question. Unfortunately, however, it happened that there were many things going on within him, and which of these was the exact one in question he did not know; he hardly knew the things themselves. His state of mind was really one and simple; the prime feature or cause of it would explain the whole. But he had not distinguished his thoughts and affections into cause and effects. His mother discerned this in their further conversation. He answered her questioning with what was uppermost in his mind; the central cause of all his trouble was not uppermost; it lay deep.

The conversation continued. He expanded under his mother's touch; yet his condition escaped her probing. This fact increased her earnestness; it intensified his. He expanded on all points; yet the central one remained untouched, as fifty such might remain, in spite of all examining, for the heart of man is unsearchable. His mother was fain to believe that this expansion did surely take in that secret. No; not even had he

been better known to himself, could he have been a fit interpreter to another; for this is a gift which He alone can

“Inspire
Who touched Isaiah’s hallowed lips with fire.”

No doubt, before many days are past, the Lord will give him this, with the light of a good understanding—of wisdom. No doubt: for his soul is clearly one that feareth the Lord. And the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

For the while, patience! The mother comforted herself by falling back on her previous train of reflections,—he was a good son.

Just then a knock was heard at the outer door. Charles observed that he had met Edward and Mr. Galveston; both were to arrive soon after himself. The knock was in fact theirs; for they passed by the parlor, and, though seen through the door which Charles had left ajar, did not see the mother and son.

“You are different, my dear Charles, from Edward. Come up here; sit beside me.” She motioned him on to the sofa. She used to press him to her bosom; now she laid her hand gently on his shoulder, as though the revelations of that recent conversation enti-

bled him to the respect and reverence due to manhood. She continued :

"He grew up before yet I knew so well in what practical education really consisted. And he went free, like a fledgling before its time. And he is free—free as," her voice faltered, "and no better than the common run of young men everywhere around." She paused, then resumed: "When I saw him turning out thus, I said to myself, and expressed it to your father,—may he rest in peace!—that you, at least, should not be like your brother. And I have kept to my word, dear Charles; you are not like him." She fixed her look upon his countenance. "I suppose our young folks would style it, 'tying you to my apron-strings.' What do you think, son?" And she smiled.

"I don't care, mamma," he answered earnestly; "I don't care what they would style it. I know what you have done for me; or, rather, I shall not know till I am older. Then I will thank you, as I try to do now. I will do whatever you will have me do, dearest mother."

"He went to Europe—humph!" resumed the matron, half musing; "and he took a friend with him,—a friend!—or the friend

took him. To travel—to finish education! What they did during those three months, Heaven knows! Charles," she turned abruptly to him, "you go to church, and you go to school; you may go farther and fare worse!"

The boy was listening attentively; but she broke off further reflections and said: "Come to tea; they may be waiting. But stay: you know I do not admire your brother's conduct or company. That is not enough; we should try to remould him. 'Tis hard; he is grown up. But—" and she gazed at the fair boy, whose every feature was lit up with intelligence and with the moral beauty of that fairer soul within. The sun had now gone down; and the last streaks of day alone afforded light, excepting such as was likewise shed by the uneasy glare of an odd flame upon the hearth. The sky, through the window, had softened "into that clear obscure, so softly dark and darkly pure." The stillness around was extreme; the breathing of her son, whose face was close to hers, alone broke the silence around her. And thus, as her mind reposed a moment from the activity of her reflections, her eyes rested on those of her son, her ear on the echoes of the last

words he had uttered. She saw the bloom of life before her in its mantling blush; she heard the "gush of music and the voices of the young."

She did not communicate these thoughts, but, taking the boy's arm lightly, she went with him to the adjoining room.





IV

EDWARD AND HIS LIKE.

AFTER the first salutation, all sat down to the tea-table. The company was small, consisting of the widowed mother, Mrs. Desmond, her two sons, Edward and Charles, a daughter, Emily, and Mr. Galveston. A few commonplace remarks were prompted by courtesy; but it seemed, on the whole, that Edward's friend was a visitor who met with little real warmth in that family circle. The friendship of which he was the object was anything but deep; and, if you sought for the reason, you might perhaps find that he as a friend was extremely shallow. Friendship takes the character of its object. None had felt below the surface of Mr. Galveston. Of Edward's relations with him we may see something later.

As the meal was coming to a close,—it was a plain, simple meal, and on this occasion it was gone through drily enough,—a

start was given to something in the way of a conversation by Edward. Now his manner in so doing, and his motive, were quite characteristic of the man. His whole tenor of life and mind ran to the opposite pole of things from that of Charles. Yet, he was somewhat proud of the latter, whom he had long before come to look upon as a member that did honor to the family by general excellence. Edward's own habitual temper of mind was self-conceitedness in a high degree; and the commanding position which Charles had won in his esteem, was doubly meritorious on that account.

Indeed, Edward was good at heart; the badness that was in him had come from without, working inwards, not from within, outwards. In his early life, he had been left pretty much to his own counsel and direction,—a complimentary or honorary kind of education, which is very common now-a-days; and, as the mother lamented to her younger son, his own counsel and direction had given him wide field, free scope, a broad way that led whither leads the broad way of all young folks who choose their own circumstances and associations,—it led amiss.

Well, his way and motive in going about a

conversation with Charles on the present occasion, are worth the while spent on observing them. It will not take five minutes to discern that his mental culture is of a piece with the rest of the man. He has, indeed, an acquaintance with men and things,—an acquaintance about as wide as a map of the world, and about as thin too. Into that acquaintance has gone the watery substance of many a sea,—newspapers, periodicals, magazines, etc.,—just as the waters of the briny sea go down the throat of a whale.

The little fish of partial truth which has thus come in, has come in only to go down undigested, and make him indisposed with a certain squeamishness on matters of faith, and a certain wryness of head called scepticism, or infidelity. To be sure, there is something flashy in the individual. So is there in tinsel, which, nevertheless, is not gold. He will always have the latest news, and the newest discoveries, or even the oldest, if they will do for tinselling. He can lead any stranger through a golden, pearly region of his thoughts, ideas and conceits, as a showman through his store, or a *Cicerone* through the Patent Office. Yet, with all his powers of show, he will betray a latent aver-

sion for being heard more than once by the same. Once seen, not forgotten; and therefore not at liberty to repeat himself, without being dissected by honest men's logic or cut up by common sense.

Now Edward, this evening, fell across Charles, with full intent to shine and use Charles for a mirror to himself and others. But the little fellow was something deeper than a mirror. He had set to work in his young years. Earnestness and thoroughness were his seal on everything that he undertook. He had received the good seed in training at home and training at school, and he had sowed it in the virgin soil of his mind. This was exposed partly by the good circumstances of his mother's watchful care, partly by his own good sense, to the fresh air of good company, and to the genial sun of sound doctrine. He worked out his boyhood into youth, and his youth was now fast ripening in the noblest, because the most natural, of all occupations—in the thorough development of his entire nature. He will not open his mouth in presence of others without having learnt how to keep it shut; he will not talk much without having learnt how to say little well; nor will he stand up to speak before

others without having carefully learnt how to stand on his feet. He will speak of what he knows; he will know because he has studied. He has studied by taking in a little at a time, according to his capacity; and taking in more when his capacity became greater. He has not sped through the regions of learning, as a traveller over a railroad, stopping at stations, inquiring the names, and saying henceforth that he has been there. Schooled by his mother in the way of virtue and manners; developed physically by healthful bodily exercises; adorned with the accomplishments that lend grace to the person and enjoyment to society; unfolded mentally by a thorough collegiate course; he is already what few others are, but what many would fain be thought to be—bright and deep.

Edward has already begun the conversation with him, meaning him to play second, himself playing first.





V

THE KINGLY IMAGE.

“**I** WAS thinking, I suppose,” said Charles, in answer to a question of his brother, “about school and school matters.”

“You had your eyes hard fixed on the ground, as if there was no one within a mile of you; and you were walking as briskly as if there were a regiment after you. But what are your class-matters, these days?” And as Edward spoke, he pushed his cup and saucer gently away, signifying that he had done with the table; and he removed his chair to face the fire, while his bland question intimated something of what next he wanted to do. He served Galveston and himself with cigars, saying:

“Has mother or sissy any objection?”

“None whatever, Edward,” answered the lady. “Enjoy yourselves.”

“But we shall not enjoy ourselves, if you mean to withdraw”

"We will not, Edward; Emily has her work-table here, and I shall busy my fingers with something."

The mother and daughter sat a little retired from the fire, to the right of which Edward took his place, Galveston on the left, and Charles was left more or less between. The latter did not feel much disposed for conversation, whether learned or light; his mother's interview with him had quite subdued the tone of his mind into a spirit of thoughtfulness and silence. Upon his countenance, so regular in its outlines, sat the expression of impassive reserve. He answered his brother's question by saying simply:

"I have been studying the question of Free Will, Edward."

"What learned matters!" observed sister Emily to her mother.

"It sounds big," answered Charles, "but, dear me! it only explains the Catechism you and I used to learn, Emily."

"Yes, yes!" remarked Edward, with a weighty movement of the head and a puff from the cigar, and with the air in general of one who had embarked on a difficult, but not unfamiliar subject; "I have read a good deal on that point, at one time or another."

He might have said the same of every other point.

"But, Charlie," asked Emily, "what is it, in our old catechism, that your learned philosophy explains?"

"A good many things, Emmy. For instance, whether we have a free will at all."

"Oh!" she laughed merrily. "I knew that long ago! Of course, we have a free will. And you told me once I had a pretty strong one. I know that without philosophy."

Charles confessed that he did too. He inwardly thought the tale of his own conscience proof enough that all man's life is turning on the hinge of Free Will. The straits and pinchings of his conscience, and the whole warfare of a life upon earth seem conclusive enough. Or else, why does the conscience pinch if he is not in fault? and how can he be in fault, if, instead of the right, he has not freely done something wrong?

It happened, too, at this moment, that his lively imagination painted before him a certain Heart, crowned with thorns and crimson as the setting sun. Those thorns seemed the effect of Free Will,—of the Free Will which in man had gone astray, and would

have wandered for eternity, if yonder Heart had not struggled after it, and carried man's griefs and absorbed his love in Itself.

This momentary reflection, indistinct in its outlines, was, in its effect, like the spell of a pleasant memory—softening, soothing, throwing him back into the atmosphere he had breathed a while before. He turned to his sister and said impressively:

“Do you remember those words of the catechism: ‘God made me to His own image and likeness, and this likeness is in my soul, because my soul is a spirit?’ And those other words: ‘As in one God there are three Persons, so, in my one soul, there are three powers, my memory, my understanding, and my will?’ It is wonderful how much a child knows, when it knows its catechism!”

“Yes, Charles,” observed Mrs. Desmond, “if it only understood as much as it knows.”

Galveston here remarked, in a polite manner: “Our young friend,” meaning Charles, “evidently understands more than he says.”

“Oh, not at all!” replied the young scholar, quickly. “I referred to what is only the result of a little study and reflection, that God knows and wills and is free to make a world or unmake it; so man, in his own little

way, has a mind and a will, for he is a spirit, and is free, accordingly, to do or undo, just as he likes; and to make his fortune for eternity."

"Well, that is a noble view, at all events," said Galveston, graciously.

The other answered: "I imagine that the Maker of the world meant, in forming us, to draw a picture of Himself,—the Maker of the world, do I say? As if I were a free-mason, who will speak only of the Architect of the Universe!"

"Oh, my dear Charles," observed his mother, smiling, "we shall never mistake you for a free-mason!"

"Thank you, mother; and indeed I am only a school-boy when I say, that I imagine our good God bending over a tablet, on which He is going to paint us. The tablet is nothing, and not a tablet at all; it is pure nothing, out of which He is going to make something."

"Well, how does He do it?" asked Emily.

"I don't know, sissy; only that he touches off a stroke on the blank vacancy, and He thereby causes something to be. If He strikes off a couple of strokes, or a dozen, or a hundred, He thereby draws a much more

perfect portrait of Himself; for every line is an image of some holy perfection of His own. His perfections are infinite; so He can draw an infinite number of pictures. This I know, that spirits,—a soul, for instance,—are the highest order of Divine portraiture. That is why we make so much of being created living souls, because we are made thereby in His own kingly image and likeness."

"Well, Charles," put in Mr. Galveston, "you remind me of something I saw in Paris. Do you remember," he turned to Edward, "our visiting that portrait-gallery?"

The person thus addressed, answered briefly that he was not sure he did remember.

"At all events," continued the other, "you may not have observed a thing which attracted my notice. A gentleman was sitting there for his portrait. The artist drew the first draught with a crayon; and the outlines thus sketched corresponded well enough with the general cut of the face. Then he made several rapid strokes, here and there, and really, it was marvellous to see several new features stand out upon the spot; there was now such an identity of face between what was there on the canvas and what was on

the man. Yet, thus far, observe, it was only by lines that the face had been executed. But I could readily form an estimate of what the painting would become, when, like the paintings on the walls, and like that portrait of Miss Emily over Edward's head, it should become colored, tinted, and shaded, relieved and contrasted. This is the idea, Charlie, which you give me, as your theory of creation."

"You flatter me, Mr. Galveston," said the youth, laughing; "you make me seem quite learned. But, really, I only know my catechism, as does Emily there."

"But, saving her presence," said the gentleman, "I do not think she could puzzle you. Could you, Miss?"

"Perhaps I could," she said, with a jealous toss of her head. "Tell me, Master Charles, how so many things can be made out of nothing?"

"Tell me, Miss," answered he, nothing daunted, "how so many lines can be drawn on canvas?"

"Oh, answer my question first!" she cried. And the company laughed at the thrust and parry.

"I'll answer my own first," he said. "An

artist can draw fifty lines, and the reason is—in the power of his elbow!" She was the first to enjoy the conceit. He went on: "It is an easy thing, even for man's slender power, to draw an infinity of lines. Indeed, is it not harder for him to draw the same curve a second time, than to make fifty attempts, all turning out different? Now, for your question, Emmy: it must be easy, from the stand-point of Almighty Power, to create any number of creatures; among them man, having a spirit as lively as yours, and a body as—"

"Ah, Charles," she said, with mock gravity, "you know how to get out of a difficulty."

"And you, sissy, know how to get into one."

"How is that?" she ejaculated with alarm. The mother, amused, looked inquiringly at Charles.

He explained: "You were playing the piano to-day, while I was listening."

"Was that all?" she exclaimed, with an expression of relief.

"She is often in that fix," observed Edward.

"O, that is not all," resumed Charles. "But what did I hear! You ran parts of one

measure into parts of another, without time or patience, without rhyme or reason."

"My fingers were cold," she said, in excuse.

"I dare say they were; and your ardor for playing was not very warm, I suppose. At any rate, see this, sissy; you could strike melody out of dumb notes, and put music into them by stoppages and rests, no less than by time and measure; do you ask me, now, how so many things can be made out of blank nothing, when our good God is the artist, and He, much more than you, not only puts time and measure into things, and a kingly image into the highest, but intervals and spaces between them?"

"Excellent! Charlie," exclaimed Galveston.

"Emily," said Mrs. Desmond, smiling, "you had better attend to your work and leave Charlie alone."





VI.

ON THE DEEP BLUE SEA.

CHARLES had been developing his subject and developing himself at one and the same time. He had never before seen the matter so well for himself as now, when endeavoring to make others see. Meanwhile, the calm of that March evening had become ruffled by a breeze, and the breeze had waxed till it blew a gale and whistled in the chimney-top, making the draught of their cheery fire stronger and its brightness brighter. In the glare of the fire shone the elegant wall-paper round the apartment, here deepening into a lurid crimson, and there refining into an alabaster-like whiteness. Over the fire-place ticked the golden time-piece, and just now it rang out eight o'clock. The mirror over the mantel-piece gave back the countenances of all in the room. The mother and sister were most retired from the fire, and, like the matrons

and virgins of more holy times than ours, sanctified their hours with the work of their hands, and sanctified themselves with the hours that they thus worked. Charles sat by the same table with them, but nearer the fire, and his face, as he conversed, was suffused with color, partly through the glow of warmth from within, partly through that from without. Edward sat at his right hand, facing Mr. Galveston on the left.

The wind whistled in the chimney-top; the clouds were seen through the window driving from the east over a sky previously so pure. Did the mother recall her reflections on that beautiful sky of the early evening, and perhaps her comparison of its spotless azure with the spotless character of her son? Was she in the act of shuddering at the thought, that as the one had already become clouded, so might the other be? Or, was it that the breeze may have borne on its wings tidings from the far-off east,—tidings under the shape of presentiment, a gloomy foreboding that something might have taken place in the regions which that wild wind swept,—might have taken place and concerned her,—concerned her and was unknown to her? Was it one of these thoughts

or none of them that made her look up towards the mantel-piece, when a gust more violent than any was heard without, and then made her drop her head lower on her embroidery and work on in pensive silence?

We know not; but it so happened that, on the same evening, an Atlantic steamer from Europe to America was sailing in mid-ocean; and a person intimate with the family, an uncle of Edward and Charles, was aboard of her. The bright evening had allured all the passengers out from the cabins, and the calm glassy surface of the water did so far reassure even the most timid, that, when his majesty the sun went down, none felt inclined to follow. The moon, near her full, was already in the sky, and she kept the twilight lingering, till it changed into her own silvery haze, that lit up the horizon around. But now one and then another fleeting cloud passed over her disc, and under the shadows thereof the waters lost the brilliant reflection, and became ruffled with a rising breeze. The ship gently leaned over, admitting the influence. She cleaved the waters meanwhile, and over and above the hum of voices round about him on the quarter-deck, our friend could ever hear the seething waters,

that divided before the ship's bow and were left foaming on either side of her; and far behind they kept trailing after her in the snowy wake, which, like a moonlit glory of her own, never deserted her.

The night was splendid. Even amid the scenes of nature's wildest havoc and devastation, how our traveller felt at home with mother nature in that night's harmless majesty! The world which he had left and the world to which he was going both seemed to be standing round the horizon and gazing in mutual amity on this calm and restful "cradle of the deep."

The scene was enough to inspire confidence. Amid agents so terrible, now lulled into a repose so profound, the soul felt the influence of a sweet spell stealing over it,—the charm of a confiding trust,—as if it lay under the hand of One far mightier than clouds and sea,—One who could command the winds and waves and they obeyed. "No wonder," thought our friend, "no wonder there should be found men, yes, whole bands of men, who in the spirit of such confidence as here is inspired,—confidence in God and in the creature that obeys His Will—listen readily to heaven's call, leave house and

country, abandon father and mother; and in this spirit of deep confidence go into whatsoever land shall be shown them, go with staff in hand, an emblem of the Lord whom they lean upon, go without scrip or purse, and perhaps without a sandal under foot; for no doubt they hear, as they go, the song of angels who are hovering round their path:— ‘How fair on the mountains are the feet of them that evangelize peace, that evangelize good things!’” And yonder moon, that sailed as securely in the sombre paths of the sky as the good ship below in the pathless tracks of the deep, seemed to bear witness and give sanction to his thoughts with the seal of her light from above; and she lit up every nook and corner, and followed every motion and action on board of that mighty wanderer over the fathomless ocean.

The ship leaned over to the rising wind, but now no longer to recline. The waves rose swelling under the stiffening breeze, and the ship leaned over and leaned back, and rolled majestically. Passengers felt unsteady and went below.

The swelling waters became crested with angry, foaming tops, and the moon slowly withdrew her countenance, hiding it totally

behind a thick cloud, which now hung out over the horizon far and wide. Darkness closed the good ship in, and it seemed fraught with thunder and lightning, as if by contrast to deepen the gloom; and the billows began to play with her, and rose higher than her sides, frowning over her stern, and fell down again far below her propellor, leaving it to dance a useless whirligig in the air.

The brave remnant of the gay evening party became very scarce. But our friend still held out on deck; he never liked the air down below; he preferred the life of winds that "blew and cracked their cheeks." Nor was he alone, as he sat muffled up beside the quarter-deck skylight. Two gentlemen, who walked arm-in arm, had not been stirred out of their beat, even by the increasing unsteadiness of the rolling ship. Another person, too, stood hard by, solitary, keeping the night watch; he was observing the binnacle, in which the compass marked the ship's course. Five years before, he was well known to Mr. Desmond, who now sat by the skylight; he was well known to Edward also. But the light from the binnacle betrayed his features now to no one; he was not observed. There was on his counten-

ance, otherwise delicate-looking, a pallor and a wanness, which now, in the light of the lamp, gave his features the hue of death.

The darkness was thick; the waves were tempestuous and roaring, as they surged round the sides; but by no other sounds were the reveries of our two solitary friends broken, save by certain snatches of the conversation which the couple of gentlemen, marching up and down, carried on as they marched. Very probably, these snatches would not have attracted their notice at all, but that a familiar name was dropped:

"Edward Desmond is his name, you say?" inquired one of the couple.

"So; as I read the order of—" the vessel lurched heavily, and the speaker was cut short by his own attempt to keep his footing; he made a wild grasp at the quarter-railing.

"At the city of—?"

"C——" rejoined the other, curtly. Again she rolled over. Our friend beside the skylight, found himself, in the twinkling of an eye, lodged many feet away, at the ship's side. The two perambulators roared with laughter, as they discerned the mishap dimly through the darkness; and forthwith they beat a hasty retreat down the gangway.

Our maltreated friend recovered himself as quickly as possible, and left the winds and waves to play with other victims than himself.

And the lightning flashed over the lonely sailor, who stood by the compass. He shivered in the keen blast of the east wind. He had friends, but some were far away; and one, who had just now been so near, was not recognized, nor had recognized him. Far away that night, Edward, his old companion, and Charlie, an acquaintance of his, were seated by the cheery fire, in the family circle, more cheery still. Charlie, in the bloom of youth, and in the enjoyment of brilliant talent, was just then expanding under the genial smile of his mother and friends. His learning had all the freshness of youth, his wit the ingenuousness of a child. But the forlorn sailor, far away on the high sea, stood at his post; and the wind and the rain played with him as their own.

The gentleman, meanwhile, had reached the bar down below; and, as he passed, heard one of the couple, who preceded him, order "a bottle of the best Scotch" into the saloon. Next morning, rising betimes, he saw the pair stretched at full length over in a corner; their appearance bespoke little

self-control at the time that they had thrown themselves upon the couches. There was some *debris* on the table beside them; more than one glass went to form the ruins; and several bottles lay empty beside them. Elsewhere than overhead had the winds and waves played a trick or two.

We shall return, after a while, to the members of this seafaring party.





VII.

THE FINGER OF GOD.

IT may have been presentiment that weighed down the mother's heart that night,—presentiment of the kind which a spirit, whether good or evil, may instil. The party around her was bright and gay. Edward alone looked sombre, and puffed his cigar; then, taking it from his mouth, mused and puffed again, gazing intently at the glowing coals, as if he told his fortune there. Galveston was passing merry remarks with Charles and Emily. The eyes of the young lady were on her crochet-work, but now and then they sparkled with a flash at Charles; who, intrepid as was his wont, did battle with her, and though not always victor, still won honor by his bravery. His fingers were engaged meanwhile in the pages of a book. And so the moments passed.

But the presentiment of the mother weighed upon her spirit, as the sigh of the wind was heard without. Her Angel Guar-

dian, or that of her son Edward, may have been whispering in her ear. An evil was brooding over the house, and was borne along, as it were, in those fitful gusts of the east wind. The uncle of Edward, abroad that night on the high seas, heard the name of Edward Desmond in the mouths of strangers,—and such strangers they were! The mother's ear seemed to catch the same sound. It was an angel's whisper.

A knock at the house-door interrupted her reverie and the conversation of the others. The servant, who answered the knock, came with the new-comer to the sitting-room.

"Master James Lambeth, ma'am," she said, introducing Charles' college friend, and our acquaintance of the early evening.

He saluted the members of the company, and while Charles gave him a chair, relieving him of his hat and gloves, James said to Mrs. Desmond: "I am late, but I thought it better to come even now than not at all, and so break my promise to Charlie."

The lady answered cordially that she was happy to see him at all hours and at any time.

"For auld lang syne, to be sure," the ser-

vant familiarly remarked. She was an old domestic, had seen both Edward and Charles in their cradles, and could speak freely, with the privilege of age and many services. "For auld lang syne, I like to see master James' face—and for Charles' sake."

"And I am sure," said Charles to his friend, "that we are glad for one another's sakes."

"But, Charlie, you know you brought me here on a mercenary motive this evening; you wanted to favor me with a talk."

"Ah!" exclaimed Emily, "does he give you a talk now and then, as he does to others?"

James laughed. The mother informed him that the young lady was still excited after some skirmishes with her brother.

James said gravely that he did not think he could safely stand by Charles, if he was called upon to stand as champion against him.

This pleased the young lady much; and she said forthwith: "Well, please put some question that will puzzle him."

"Oh!" he exclaimed, "that would, at least, be cruel in such company, if, indeed, possible."

"Tut! tut!" answered the vindictive sister.

"But I did come," resumed James, "to ask Charles how he understood a certain difficulty about Free Will."

"The very thing he was showing off in!"

"Indeed, Miss. Well, the difficulty was, how, when we are always on the quest for good things, we take what is absolutely bad; for sin is bad."

"There!" exclaimed the triumphant sister.

"Oh! I did not mean to give him this nut to crack; only to discuss it with him," said James, as he smiled at his friend.

Charles answered: "Joking aside, I caught hold of a proverb the other day, and applied it thus. The proverb was: 'A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush!' Is not that so?"

"Yes."

"Now, it is certain that the two in the bush are, in themselves, worth more than the one in the hand. Yet for him who *has* the one and *has not* the two, the one in the hand is rightly said to be worth the two in the bush."

"Very well."

"Come on, now; the same one in the hand is worth three in the woods, four on the

mountain top, a dozen on the sea, a hundred in New Zealand, eh? You agree. Nay, is not that one in the hand worth the whole world, if you have a great appetite and *have* the bird, and *have not* the whole world?"

"Very, very true, Charles," said his mother.

"Now, Emmy," continued he, "do you remember the story of Esau selling his birthright for a mess of pottage?"

"Perfectly well."

"That birthright was a great thing; out just then it seemed immeasurably far off—his eyes were so weak from hunger—he could not see it well. But he did see his brother's pottage quite well; he was within eating distance of that. So what did he do, feeling his hunger, seeing his brother's pottage, and not seeing his birthright? He bartered his birthright for the pottage. And so man barter God for a trifle, for some creature which will glut the hungry maw of some desire."

James was deeply interested, and took up the thread of Charles' thought: "So, if a man have the hungry maw of avarice or the like, and his head almost dizzy with passion and his eyes quite weak-sighted, and God

is apprehended only distantly, vaguely, by the scratched warrant of poor reason, then he is in great danger of taking his neighbor's goods and setting God aside."

"That is my idea, James; you evidently approve of it. You remember the story of Penelope and her hundred suitors, while Ulysses, her true husband, was absent, and was supposed to be dead. The story goes, that, after the fall of Troy, Ulysses was tossed about, for many years, on the high sea and on land. But at length he found his way back to his island kingdom. He was not recognized; so, unobserved himself, he observed what was going on. A hundred suitors were soliciting the favor of Penelope's hand. She was rejecting them. At last, in despair of ever being freed from her tormentors, she consented to leave the matter to the decision of the gods or chance; and the means to be adopted was this: The bow which her true husband had used, was an immense one; no ordinary warrior could draw it. Let the suitors stand forth, and whoever should make the best attempt at shooting with Ulysses' bow, the same should have her hand. The agreement was made; and the suitors stood forth on the day of

trial. But a stranger was amongst them. They used their best endeavors, one after another, to use the ponderous weapon, but all in vain; to a man, they failed. At last the stranger's turn came. The others, no doubt, laughed in his face; his face was not the less grave on that account, nor his eye the less fiery, as he lifted the bow and —"

"What did he do?" asked Emmy, breathless with curiosity.

"He lifted the bow and drew it with perfect ease, and clang it went! The first arrow was lodged in the heart of a suitor. On the spot another arrow flew, another and another, until the flying suitors lay all dead to a man, transfixed with the true husband's arrows. At the very first draw of the bow, Penelope had recognized her true love and fled to him."

"That is beautiful!" said Mrs. Desmond.

"And now, James," the speaker went on, "your idea suggests that God is ever near us, moving amid the thousand creatures which are all soliciting our affections. We must learn to discern Him and to reject them. And I suppose we may say that He uses His bow as no one else can; He stretches it over the heavens, as He expands the heavens themselves."

"We must recognize Him," said the lady, entering earnestly into such a worthy run of Christian thought. "Remember how He walked with the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, and He made their hearts burn on the way. And after supper they remembered that; and they regretted that they had not been more thoughtful while on their journey with Him. So, my dear children," she said, with true motherly affection, "God is always walking with us. If we are thoughtful, we can feel Him: He makes our hearts burn with love at times: His graces are always being shed upon us. The Lord is here, and we know it not. The Finger of God is everywhere!"

"I read the other day," said James, quietly, "a bright description of clouds as they mass together in brilliant phalanx; and the wind is constantly increasing them with new little fleeces, transparent and light and airy. These are added on in order, and as the mass spreads over the heavens, it appears like a magnificent array in serried ranks, and when the sun rises they gleam, tinged and skirted with brilliancy; when the sun is at his height, they are white as driven snow; and when the sun sets, they glow as gold

never yet glowed; for gold was never heaped in such a mass as these numberless bright clouds which cover that quarter of God's sky. Now perhaps, madam," he continued, addressing the good lady, "the man who will constantly be mindful of God, in the way you say, and will do his duty in the daily actions which are multiplied by his weeks and his years, heaps up in heaven a brilliant mass of merit, ordered and beautiful like that gorgeous mass of clouds."





VIII.

THE GLARE OF FALSE SCIENCE.

THE two young friends resembled one another not a little, in the formation of their minds and their antecedent training. It was certainly a pretty set of thoughts which they detailed. Charles was indeed young, and had seen little of either life or learning; but he had seen that little well, like the "man of one book" whom other men fear. He had, besides, made his acquisitions productive; he put them out at interest, as soon as he made them his own. He brought them into connection, whether for contrast or combination, with those that went before and with what came after. Chance reflections in the ordinary circumstances of life; points that worked themselves out, of their own accord, in his thoughtful mind, came upon his set daily studies like the broken stone which fills up crevices, like the

cement which binds quarried stones, or like the cornices on noble walls, to adorn, if not to consolidate. He was excellent soil, and in the course of a sound education, he had received many good seeds, which it was instinctively his care to keep ever growing.

Edward alone was not satisfied. Earlier in the evening, he had opened the conversation with quite another intent than that of being thrown so heavily into the shade by the engaging figure and persuasive words of a brother, eight years his junior. Their mother, too, had risen and seated herself in the great arm-chair between himself and Charles, evidently in order to be nearer the latter; for her motherly heart was fluttering with agreeable surprise. She said some simple words, and then, noticing his neck-tie disordered, hanging over his open white front, she put out her hand, arranging it with the ever-busy attention of a fond mother, at the same time pronouncing Charles' name.

"Thank you, mamma," he responded; and his face beamed with pleasure at the little attentions.

Edward was displeased at the whole round of circumstances, trifling as they were, and not meant to bear any of the significance

which he attached to them. He threw the stump of his second cigar into the fire, saying :

"You say all these things on a very high key, Charles."

"How is that, Edward?" asked his brother. "What we have been talking about are matters of our Catechism."

"Many men deny the whole thing, that we are free at all."

"Oh, but, Edward, you don't go by what men say, unless they are qualified to say it. If they tell us the earth is round, we believe them; they know best. But if the Church, for instance, says that man is free, on her account alone we should believe her; for she knows best in these matters."

"See, Charlie, I have witnessed more of men and things than you; and I have learned that, of the things which go about as certain doctrine, many men admit but a fraction; and others admit what they do, only to find out their mistake. Our minds must be free and untrammelled on these points, not bound to fit into a certain framework,—to be saddled with the truth, whether they will or no. The enjoyment of liberty is the first condition of mental soundness."

"Liberty!" echoed Charles, a little warmly; "there is such a thing as libertinism. Are you speaking of—"

"What are *you* speaking of?" interrupted Edward, sharply. "Will you please take what I say. I speak in the terms of a watchword that means something—not your devotees' mottoes, nor any other narrow-minded principles—call them Christian principles, or high perfection, or dub them what you like. See, Charlie, I tell you all the outcome of your so-called perfection does not reach the starting-point of modern enlightened men. Their starting-point is this—Man's Dignity! which observe, which keep, which cherish, along with your reason independent and your morals free!"

Charlie here tried to put in a word; but the other ran on:

"This is their starting-point; and their goal is Liberty; and their watchword is Liberty; and of this I speak. In the words of its apostles, the ship of destiny is moving over the waters, and a breeze is filling her sails; whence she comes and whither she goes, we know not; for the spirit breathes where it will. But the ship moves on towards bliss, and the land of liberty—with

a free press, free thought, rights of man, woman's rights, rights of children—"

"And where are their duties?" exclaimed Charles.

"My dear son," said Mrs. Desmond, with considerable surprise of no agreeable kind, "where did you imbibe those ideas?"

Edward looked at his mother; his face was flushed. On meeting her glance, his eyes fell, and he resumed his former quiet posture. But the rejoinder of Charles excited him again:

"That talk of yours makes me think of the transcendental Bancroft."

"Look here, Charlie," he resumed with some asperity, "you have the queerest notions I did ever—I would advise you to study nature more and your books less. That is, travel, and see, and taste, and have experience of men and things. Doesn't your Horace say it—*Usus te plura docebit*; an ounce of experience is worth a pound of your book-lore. Travel with eyes open to nature's open leaves, and refuse to read no leaf that lies open, or by any means can be laid open. Less of your printed Catechism, and more of nature's broad unwritten one. Study men, not their sayings; study the

living, not books which are dead. And you will find that there is more whitewash in the tabernacles of your devotees, than there is varnish in all our common-sense halls of modern progress put together. The ship of Destiny and Progress on the waters! Eh, my boy?"

Charles rose quickly and took a weekly paper from the sideboard, saying, as he did so:

"Edward, if I were more used to the cant of modern times, my ears might now be less offended. As things are"—he looked Edward in the face as he resumed his seat, saying—"you shock me! Here is the weekly of ten days ago, March 15th. Your words are such an exact echo of what I read in the extract of a book reviewed here,—allow me to favor the company with it."

"What is the book, Charles?" asked his mother, as the youth unfolded the paper. James looked over his friend's shoulder, as the latter went on:

"The book reviewed is entitled: 'The Gospel of the World's Divine Order; or, Free Religious Thoughts.' That is, the author considers himself the evangelist of a new and true Gospel; and his thoughts are quite free—free unto disease, the disease of

a morbid intellect's licentiousness. Shall I read the extract?"

"Do, son," said his mother; and while all listened, he read:

"'When shall the churches' Sabbath bells, ringing gladness and joy, call us to a higher, purer worship than that which we now have—a purer worship, in which the book of God—not Moses' or Paul's writings, but this all-glorious world and man—shall be explained to the intellect and affections, by men accomplished in literature and science, men who are therefore true religious teachers. Those men or that church, which, instead of preaching the Cross and its sad doctrines, shall bring to the pulpit, the prison, the flower and the rock, the works of the poet, the historian and the philosopher, . . . will take rank with the people's leaders and best benefactors.' Now, what do you think of that? Mother, is not that man—to use a dreadfully strong word—is not that man *blaspheming*?"

The lady, sadly shook her head, lamenting such daring impiety. For a moment there was silence, which Edward broke, saying:

"Charles, you go on the principle, 'Throw mud; some will stick.'"

"These men are knee-deep in mud. That

man, who writes so, is of England; he studies nature's open book! We had another man in this city, last month; he was, and is an American. He preached or lectured on 'Man and Money.' My attention was called to the lecture by our professor. The newspaper reported it accurately. And the reverend preacher of the Gospel thought in his lecture that,—well, to sum it up briefly, he thought, somewhat freely, with that Liberty which you prize so much. He had thought much in his time, as our professor said, but it was out of the way; as a man may run fast and far, yet be on the wrong track; or sing well and be quite out of tune. For he said, among other things, that Christ had indeed pronounced God and mammon to be irreconcilable, but that he (Rev. preacher!) thought otherwise. For our Lord did not mean precisely that which He said. But what He did mean was that while mankind was in its lower and weaker state, it could not worship God and mammon together; just as one in the state of childhood cannot do what men may do. But this state of weakness is not to last always. By-and-by, when the fire is past the state of kindling, you may throw on armfuls and armfuls of wood, that would have

smothered and destroyed it at the beginning. So, by-and-by, when mankind is past the time of small things and feeble things, you may throw on pleasure and wealth and honor and influence, and all those manly things which we sigh for and aspire to, but which would have smothered and destroyed Christianity at the beginning. The time will come when men can be lovers of pleasure and yet lovers of God. Our preacher finds all this out by looking at 'the design'—such were his words—'of Divine Providence in reference to this world, in order to ascertain the truth of the matter.' One who does not look at things thus, will be at a loss to know why a law, which has made the pursuit of pleasure sinful from the time of Adam downward, should be reversed in the good time coming. But pray observe, that one who does not look at things in the same way as our preacher, had better not put such a question to one who does; it would be presumption. Therefore money-making without spiritual profit, worshipping mammon without lessening the worship of God, will be one of the grand developments in mankind's perfect state; and meanwhile money-making is one of the means thereto,—a means of grace and

eminently so,—a divine ordinance, and part of that general scheme of religion of which speculative theology (so he spoke) is only a part. The reverend preacher's own wants, in the way of money, exceed his income, he said. His income is estimated at from \$30,000 to \$40,000 a year. Therefore he has a stronger incentive to use the means of grace than another, whose wants did not exceed his income: why? because he is more strongly incited to go after money. There Edward," concluded the youth, with a laugh, "there is an example of Liberty or Progress, Reason independent and morals free! Dress the doctrine up as one likes,—the tail still betrays that it is of the brute order, and no reasonable thing."

James and Galveston laughed.

Charles observed again: "That preacher does not keep the counsels.

"Counsels! commandments!" ejaculated Edward. "Tell me, why is it that some people cannot keep the commandments?"

"Cannot keep them?" echoed Charles. "Of course they can."

"I say they can't," reiterated the other. "I have known men who cannot keep some of the commandments!"

"You have *known* such?" inquired Emily, looking at him with her two bright eyes, and flavoring her words with sisterly indignation.

"Aye, Miss, if it please you," answered her brother, with a sneer. The young lady spoke to him no more that night. He went on:

"What of these? Are they damned for what they could not help? Is the compass-needle condemned, which, whether you will or no, ever points to the north? Is the stone condemned, which, will ye, nill ye, still falls to the earth?"

"Oh, Edward, what shocking reasoning! A stone falls the same way, because it does not know better,—it does not know worse—it knows nothing—it has no mind—and so no will. But men! enlightened men, of modern Progress! have they no mind? Tut! tut! A compass-needle looks only one way, but a man knows fifty ways; and perhaps only one of them is right."

"And pray," retorted the other, "if he meets a stone there, and loses his footing and falls—if he meets an occasion which demands complaisance, and he yields—who placed the occasion? Why, his nature, or chance, or whatever you like to call it, that

works behind the scenes and pulls the wires and upsets him; and you want to make a scape-goat of him! Where is your knowledge of man and the world?"

"Really, Edward, excuse me if I have offended you by my manner; but one word more. A man can be blind and slavish when he will. When he can see the nature of sin,—as every one can,—and won't see, he is blind, and becomes the slave of sin. As that poor man yesterday, if indeed he was in his senses—who went up the monument, and wilfully shutting his eyes to what he was going to do, jumped off. You cannot call that Liberty. It is sheer slavery. They don't know what they are about; yet about it they go—into the unknown, like the chaos which Milton describes. 'What is unknown goes for magnificent.' And meanwhile, they desert their conscience and their duty; they make a solitude there and call it peace!"

The mother rose; James, too. There was a general breaking-up of the party. Charles took James' hand in his, and said in an undertone:

"My dear James, believe me, I am sorry to have given you so much trouble this evening, and to so little purpose. You have

been condemned to what I do not like,—to be a listener to a disagreeable dispute.” And, as he said this, it was clear from his changed manner that anything but hot enthusiasm was ruling him at present; he was dejected at his own want of self-control.

James answered: “Don’t mention it; but I have witnessed in you a power of thought and fancy which I never dreamt of, and which has done me more good than a long discussion with you could have done.”

Mrs. Desmond remarked to James: “It is after nine o’clock, and you have a long way to go. Many thanks for the attention you have shown my Charles. I trust you will soon drop in again and carry out the purpose with which you called this evening.”

James said that he would, thanking Mrs. Desmond for her kindness; promised Charles to meet him next morning early, about the college; and taking leave of the company present, proceeded to the house-door with Charles and his mother, to both of whom he bade good-night there





IX.

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THE KEY-NOTE WANTING.

CHARLES retired to his room without revisiting the scene of his discussion. It was a scene too full now of the spirit called remorse, which he felt stinging him for his want of self-command,—that useful spirit which goes about doing good,—that spirit whose vocation it is to draw good out of evil, and one which, though not gentle to the touch, is yet benign in its intentions, sweet in its effects. Charles had it upon him when he turned aside from the sitting-room; it had followed him thence.

When Mrs. Desmond returned to the room, Emily had slipped away from the rude Edward. The two friends alone remained. Edward said to his mother that he desired to accompany his friend Galveston some of the way home; but he felt bound to subjoin, considering the regularity of the house, that he would be back in little or no time. With

that, Mr. Galveston took leave of the lady, and the street door closed behind the couple.

While stepping across the threshold, Galveston looked at Edward. The latter had in his countenance an expression, which, in another than Edward, you might style demure. The two gained a respectful distance from the house before a word was interchanged. Edward pulled out his cigar-case. It was late and dark; he would make bold to take a puff out-of-doors, and he offered his case that Galveston might do the same. Galveston surveyed him again, and said quietly

"I say, Ned, that is a fine young fellow, that brother of yours."

Edward had just lit a match, but his bottled-up indignation suddenly expended itself on the match and on Charles, at one and the same instant; it saluted the match by throwing it into the gutter, and Charles with—

"The pert young puppy!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Galveston, much amused; "but come now, if you did come off second-best, why be so angry?"

"Second-best!" gulped Edward. "I gave it to him though."

"I am sorry," observed the other, "not to

have made his acquaintance sooner. Smart young fellow! Said many fine things." Galveston looked slyly at Edward as he went on: "Honestly and candidly now, I should not consider myself, if I were in your place, to have got the best of that discussion, 'pon my—"

"Pshaw!" pettishly rejoined Edward. "And his mother too—she pets him as if he were still in his babyhood. He has turned eighteen. They look at one another and seem to be shocked; and Emmy is about as bad."

"Eh, but you said things that would shock a Hottentot! Where did you get by heart all that *cant*"—he uttered the word with a peculiar emphasis—"about liberty and so forth?"

"Where did I get it! Do *you* ask, Galv?" exclaimed Edward, with an honest expression of the broadest astonishment on his face. "Well, you have asked and said things worse than that. What made you speak this evening about Paris. I thought you were going to let out something to my mother."

"How suspicious you are! I had not the remotest intention. But in honest faith, Ned, that brother of yours is a fine young fellow.

I admire him. I could not help chiming in with him. He has a head on his shoulders"—

"Which he knows how to wag!" Edward angrily rejoined. There was a pause. Then the last speaker returned in another tone:

"Well, he has had an education different from mine. He has had nothing else to draw off his attention." The speaker seemed condoling with himself; Galveston let him muse on. "They did not make a summer plant of me and put me in a hot-house." He meant that his education had not been conducted entirely at a Catholic school. "One has not time for everything now-a-days, when there are so many acquirements to make. I was busy with different things in my time. My readings developed much."—Much what? Vice?—"I have gone over a good part of English literature, and read many of the writers on philosophy." He had gone over literature for its blossoms and its colors, not for its sap, its substance, and its truth; and the blossoms, without the sap, had not expanded into fruit. As to philosophy, he had gone over it and left it as he found it—if uncertain, he was none the wiser; if certain, none the happier; if immoral, well, he found it so; if infidel, he left it so. "Tut!"

he exclaimed, rousing himself; "one can be a man without thinking in the same groove as other men." He knows that there are many grooves for thought; does he know that generally all are wrong except one? "A man must be original and independent!"

Please, gentle reader, let us not think otherwise; only observe that Edward means something nineteenth-century-like here—he means: A man must be original, in thinking out a new groove for himself, although a wrong one; and must be independent in keeping clear of every other groove, even though the right one.

In two words—what Edward was confessing to himself stood thus: He had made plenty of growth—understand, however, that briars and brambles went to form part thereof. He had followed many lines of pursuit—understand that there were "too many irons in the fire." He had strung his mind with many a chord, each in tune—understand, with itself alone, for none accorded well with any other; all were in want of a key-note which could regulate them to itself, and so regulate them to the rest. One chord there was which Edward had not strung—that was between his mind and heart—the chord of

practical religion, of faith, of devotion. This his education had left unstrung, and, therefore, his arts and his science were out of tune; they discoursed no melody; for the final note, on which all must rest, was wanting. In the forgetfulness of God, all the melody of life was forgotten by Edward, as it is ever forgotten by the world beside.

"But, Galveston," resumed Edward, "that place—Paris! I hate the mention of it. What do you think will come of my joining that—that—club, you know? It was the thought of this that stirred all my spleen this evening, from the moment you mentioned the name."

"That club, you call it? You ought to know, since you joined it."

"Pshaw! why didn't you keep me out of it?"

"I keep you out of it!" exclaimed Galveston; "you are of age to know what you are about."

"Or why didn't you join it along with me?"

"And *I*, too," replied the other, curtly, "am of age to know what *I* am about."

Edward was put out, and for the twentieth time, on this same topic. Galveston continued in a serious tone:

"Make up your mind to it, Ned, you are a free-mason!"

"Don't say so!" he was answered in a tone of distress, and his arm was grasped nervously by Edward's hand. "*She* gave me such a way of looking at those societies that I have never lost the impression." The speaker was alluding to his mother's early training. "You kept out of the thing."

"Which is the more strange," rejoined the other, "as I am only half a Catholic, by the father's side alone. And between ourselves, Ned, as neither of us is a father yet, or ever will be a mother, it is my opinion that for purposes of education, of bringing up, rearing, in the most intimate sense of the word, the father's side is not the better side—the father's half in the gift of breeding is not the better half. You or I will be the worse half of the two—that's my opinion. Your mother—I compliment you—is an excellent lady. But cheer up, old boy, those societies are not the same in this country as in Europe. Liberty! We are free here, man!"

"Galveston, you are trifling. Things are not so smooth as they seem."

"Come in, Ned."

They stepped into an hotel and seated themselves in the coffee-room. There were papers on the table, and, in frames on the wall round, there were various mercantile notices. One of these attracted Edward's attention; he was peculiarly sensitive to announcements of the kind:

"Europe. From Liverpool, expected at New York, the steamer B——l."

There came crowding on his mind visions of free-masons pursuing him, finding him—

"Ned," interrupted 'the worse half,' "just help yourself."

He did as bidden, and, somewhat comforted, resumed more cheerily:

"You see, Galv., I don't feel like myself at all, when her eye is upon me. She quite cow—awes me. How do you think I answered him?" Evidently his pride had met a fall.

"Why, I have told you already."

"Yes, but you tell me so many things." He sipped. "That Paris prank, for instance—and nothing has come of it so far."

"Wait awhile," replied the other, heartlessly. "'Tis time to be off. Good night."

"Good night," and they parted, neither at ease with himself, neither well mated with

the other, or with any one else. They agreed in a certain main feature of their characters—as Pilate and Herod once agreed in a certain point of their conduct, to wit: in slighting Christ; and they were made friends on that day, whereas before they had been enemies. So Edward and Galveston both agreed, in that both were without practical religion—a great, illimitable void! Each could do fair deeds and say fine things, but their best deeds and their fairest sayings were not toned by that key-note in the music of every character—a deep-seated reverence for God, the Author of all that is good. And such being the deficiency, there was something in their smoothest principles to offend true Catholic feeling, and something in their most promising actions to disappoint the promise.

Not that these two men were exceptions. Here is a country thickly strewn with educational establishments. Yet nearly all of them are useless for toning men's characters, nearly all of them have failed in this, the essential point of their profession. And the reason is: so few of them are Catholic! They will teach you,—hot-beds as they are of the mechanical and money-making arts,—they will

teach you to dive down to the bottom of the sea for pearls, or to explore the bowels of the earth for gold: they will teach you how you may climb from the surface of the earth high in the unsubstantial air, or plunge into the pathless deep and circumnavigate the globe; but one thing they do not teach, though that be the one thing needful. Not in the heavens, not in the sea, not in the far-off parts of the earth—it is closer than all these. It is in them, around them, all over them; yet they will not look at it and see. It is a moving cloud in the day of prosperity, a pillar of fire in the night of adversity; yet teach it they will not. What is it?

It is that without which they cannot live. It is the Essence, and the Presence, and the Power of God,—an atmosphere all-pervading, all-sustaining, yielding, yet irresistible. This they teach not, for they see it not with their bodily eyes; and as to the eyes of their immortal souls, they will not open *them*. Therefore are they guilty teachers, whatsoever else they profess; and because they are wanting in the fundamental note, therefore is their melody false; therefore is there no harmony among them, save in the agreement to differ. And they send forth any-

thing but Christians; and generations to the infidel; and quick conveyance everywhere—but not, not to Heaven!

Edward's suspicions were correct, when they prompted visions of his being remembered and pursued, and—he did not know what. Nor was he to know for some days; the ship was yet on the sea. In the meantime, Charlie and James had a chat or two,—with which we must acquaint the reader; and they had, moreover, an interview with their professor; it was out of class, and of such a kind as we can by no means omit to recount.





X.

IN THE SUNSHINE AND IN THE SHADE.

THE morning sun of the Annunciation was peeping through the eastern hills and resting on the "Beautiful Waters."

Charles passed through the streets in company with his mother, on business of great importance between his soul and God. They approached the Holy Table, made their thanksgiving, and returned home.

Charles had shown, on the night before, depth of thought, learning and inborn eloquence in a high degree; certainly, he had shown likewise a spirit of devotion. Yet something is wrong with him; his whole manner shows it. What can it be? Is the Lord trying him? or is there, perhaps, some secret canker eating away within? Is there some obstacle to grace, keeping out the light of heaven, and leaving its dark shadow on his soul? Oh! how little does art, how little

does science, how little riches, beauty, strength of will—how genius and eloquence avail simply nothing, if grace have not free play!

The sun was high when again he sallied forth, passed through the College, visited the Chapel again and saw the memorable picture; then pursued his way towards the Sacristy of the Church, to prepare for serving as Acolyte. Abstracted in a mood of reflection, he had not proceeded many steps, when James accosted him with a "Good morning, Charlie?"

"Good morning, indeed; happy to see you!"

"I envy you, Charlie; you go about as if all your eyes were buried in the ground, and all your affections buried in your breast.

"Affections buried in one's breast!" echoed Charles.

"Yes," said James, taking his arm, "that's the way to save one's affections—spare his eyes!"

"Well, what then?" asked Charles inquisitively.

"What then! Why, Charlie, I am no connoisseur in this matter of the affections. But I know that when one saves his affections,

then one is free. And I know too, by-the-way, that freedom is a first-class thing, as I had the honor of learning last night from some one not far off now." He bowed solemnly to Charles, who responded with a slight smile. "I think that the less your affections are vested in live stock of any kind, the more are you flush in freedom. Wherefore, I congratulate you, friend Charlie."

"Thank you, James," was the reply. They had come to a stand under the old black bell, which hung by the door in the yard. "But why congratulate me?"

"Why? Because I do you the estimable honor of supposing you to enjoy what I prize highly—freedom, independence. The heart is a weak member, that does much mischief. So, say I, none of your heart-weaknesses, none of your sensibilities for me. I don't want to be a slave."

"A slave to whom?"

"Whomsoever the heart chooses to cleave to. My dear little Charlie," he went on, pleasantly assuming a patronizing air: he was an inch taller than Charles, fuller in the shoulders, with an honest, open face, of light complexion. Beside him, Charlie looked

delicate and slim. Nevertheless, James did not lose by the contrast, for his features, though not so very regular, had something that gave you assurance and confidence in addressing him; whereas, one would not address Charles without an introduction, as it were, or some special assurance of not intruding on the sacred limits of his reserve. "My dear little Charlie, with all your philosophy you seem at a discount on some very plain matters. Don't you know that the heart and its loves, the heart and its whims, the heart and its sentiments, have made the world what it is?"

"For good as well as for bad?" queried Charles.

"You don't see much good in the world, do you?" asked the other in turn.

"There must be a good deal, since, in this same world, our Lord went about doing good; and His Heart does not do things by halves."

"Oh, the Sacred Heart of our Lord!" responded James reverently. "By such an argument as that, you cut the ground from under my feet, Charles! But still, just think that we don't let It do Its good. And, such being the case, affectionateness is the dispo-

sition,—as this world goes,—to be a slave. So, let affection never grow; and let affectionateness pine away and die!”

“Oh, but, if rightly placed, they are so many bonds unto good. To be sure, if wrongly placed, they are the bonds of slavery; but, rightly placed, our love is a mighty power unto good: one part of it binds us in this lawful direction, to our parents; another, in that other direction, to our brothers and sisters; a third, to our true friends; a fourth, to all men; and the whole of it, in sum total, to God. If you mean, by affectionateness, a degree of *sensible* love, I cannot help thinking that too a good thing; it increases the intensity of adherence, of our adhesion, of our sticking to the one good thing.”

“Well, Charlie,” answered James, and taking hold familiarly of the breast of Charlie’s coat in his two hands, he looked beamingly in his friend’s face, “your adherence may be stronger—Heaven knows how much stronger it is—than mine. You don’t believe it?” he let go his hold: “well, we won’t quarrel about a trifle—I am not so pugnacious as some of my friends.” He indulged in a mischievous wink at Charles,

who answered with a laugh, but also with a blush, thinking of his last night's little "temper." James observed the blush, and resumed quickly:

"Yes, yes, Charlie. But hang the affections, if they make a slave of a free-born citizen. They do well, I grant, about the right object; but the misfortune is, they go to the wrong one also, without asking your leave. Hallo! who are you, old fellow," he exclaimed, turning round to see who it was that had tapped him on the shoulder. It was the chain, which, hanging from the ear of the old black bell, swung soberly in the breezy air, and just now seemed to claim a hearing from James. "Oh! it's you!" he cried, taking hold of the chain and pulling the old fellow's ear; "what do you want to say, this morning? No class you know, to-day." He let the chain go, and the bell swung as if uneasy to be in motion. "Charlie, that bell is like me; it wants to move and be out in the sunshine. Come out of the shadow of this house; let us go over to the other side there. Goodness! how sober you are this morning!"

"It is time to go to the sacristy."

At this moment, a boy—a dark-eyed little

fellow, blithe as the morn, who had been playing with some others, saw Charles, and, like the merry sun-ray that James had just been sighing for, came with a spring and a bound up to the steps.

"Desmond," he said, "your professor was looking for you this morning. He thought you had promised to come and see him, about an hour before Mass."

"Indeed, Johnny," answered Charles, "I had forgotten it; did he say what he wanted me for?"

"No," replied Johnny. "What a fine morning it is!" he was going on prattling, as if desirous to continue conversing, when Desmond cut him short by saying:

"I shall go to his room after Mass."

And so saying, with scarcely another glance at the boy, he turned to go away with James. The little fellow looked as if he had not expected that, and went away to his play-fellows less buoyantly than he had come. James, who seemed rather amused, looked in Charles' face for quarter of a minute, as they pursued their way under the shadow of the house; but the other did not notice him. They came to a spot between the College and the Church, where the sunshine

crossed their path. James resolutely stood still, as he exclaimed gaily:

"Come now, you must bask awhile; although we have no grass to lie down on, but plenty of dry mud, for those who like it. But for me, the more of it the more's the pity. Don't you agree with me? Look here, Charlie,"—he looked up with evident complacency at the sun and all its neighborhood—"I feel full of welcome for that old fellow whenever he shows his jolly face through this carpet of ours. We are moles, Charlie,—we are moles! We are worse than moles, Charlie,—we are worse than moles. For moles—happy creatures!—burrow under grass, out in the country; while we, unhappy wretches! burrow under smoke, here in a city. And we have no sympathizing gardener to lift us out with a spade into the light of heaven; nor any kind housemaid to shake this eternal carpet, and give us a peep o'day; nor a single supernal being to look at us, snug as we be under this dusty old rug, unless our kind old Jove yonder sends his Mercury down and smites us with a sunbeam."

"You seem to be fond of the sunbeam," Charles observed quietly,

"I should just think I was. Are not—"

"You were preaching awhile ago," interrupted Charles, "about independence. Show yourself now independent of that sunbeam."

"Ah! preaching! aye," he looked aghast at Charlie with one eye, and very wistfully at the sun with the other, "you see, preaching is one thing—"

"And doing is another!" exclaimed Charlie, as he vainly tried to bring James along; but the latter was resolutely stone-still. "Or you would be off with me at once!"

"Oh! but what harm in a pure sunbeam?"

"That's just the way every one excuses his own weakness."

"Well, to please you, Charlie, what shall I do?" he looked demure.

"Cut your sunbeam and come with me."

"Cut it! ha! ha! Not bad!" laughed James.

"Well, now, that's not bad, either," said the other, with a degree of gratified surprise.

"What's not?"

Charles answered:—"This—the best way to get free is to give a cut or get it!"

"How is that?"

"Get a sun-stroke and you will see."

"I'll do no such thing!" said James, with solemn disapproval.

"Then you will not get free," replied the other, trying again to get him moving.

"Eh?" James put the query, standing immovable as a rock, and no less easy to convince.

"See, you bright philosopher!" said Charles, warmly, looking square in the invincible's face. "Doesn't it stand to reason that, if you get a sunstroke, you will be so free from anything like sunning yourself in the future, as rather to run the risk of being moonstruck than attempt it? Yes; well! Get a slap from one whom your affections tie you to, cut him or hurt him, be cut by him or be hurt by him, and you will find yourself wonderfully free! You will gather up the folds of your toga, and, in your mantle, covering up your face, you will suddenly fall as dead to the object of your affection as Cæsar at the foot of Pompey's statue! Eh, my philosopher? Tired of your sunbeam yet?"

"Verily, pretty nearly; but not of your theory."

"See," resumed Charles, as he took his friend's arm, "don't our susceptibilities look

very much like a valve, out of which affections fly? Just a little offence—which raises our susceptibilities—and we are safe—they are off like steam! There is this valve on both sides,—in each person; a one-sided offence raises it on one side; a double-sided offence raises it on both, and the affection is off at double quick!”

“Ah, but why does not a mother’s affection for her child escape ten thousand times?”

“There is no chance of evil *there*. Her affection is lawful and proper; and so, no need of safety-valves on one side or the other. There again,—hard times would it be for us, if the susceptibilities obtruded themselves in the dealings of our Saviour with us. He would never have put His Heart at our mercy! He would have abandoned each one of us in our cradles! He would not have lodged in that manger for five minutes! These are sacred loves. But speak of affections that are useless, or worse; that are outside of our legitimate circle, and there it is that God has provided the sensibilities to gather round and save us. Oh! James,” he continued seriously, “there lurks great danger in these tender relations, struck here and there, on the strength of a little

personal grace, of personal qualifications. The affection, once inoculated, gathers—"

"Gathers the sensibilities, eh?"

"If they will only do their duty," answered Charles.

"But take the case now," objected the other, "when they won't do their duty."

"Why, still, the man can save himself; for conscience ever remains and proclaims us cowards if we don't, with a strong hand, cut the creeper that is entwining itself round our hearts."

"Is that why you cut little Johnny, five minutes ago, when he spoke to you?"

"What are you saying, James?"

"You made a marvellously sharp turn on your heel, and the flow of his speech was cut marvellously short, as he beheld you turning away."

Charles colored, and said: "What a long time we have been talking here!"

James was notorious for teasing, but he never meant to give pain. He laid his hand on Charles' shoulder, and said tenderly: "Forgive me, Charlie, I did not mean to hurt you."

"Oh, don't mention it!" replied the other readily, but the color heightened on his cheek.

"Then, I'll stop basking in this sun of mine, and go into the shade with you, Charlie."

"Comfort yourself, it is the shade of the Church."

"Well, I agree with you there," replied James, catching the idea; "better the shadow of a Church than the sunshine of no Church."

"Well said, James."

"Good-bye, old fellow," resumed James, addressing the sun again; "tell us when you come again, and I'll unbosom myself and the breast of my coat more at large to you,—unless human respect,—unless my friend Charlie," he glanced that way, "threatens to cut me for my slavery to a sunbeam; in which case, you know, old fellow, I'd prefer to cut you. Alas!" giving his head a most hypocritical shake and smiting his breast, "where is human respect carrying me to!"

"Just come along with me," said Charles; "and as to your slavery, here or there, I'll give you a bit of advice, friend. Look at your tyrant till you get tired of him; don't spare your eyes here. Look at him as the sea stares at the sun, and gets so disgusted with his heat and his brass, that it evaporates a cloud, and covers its face; and so they

separate. Every man's character has enough of weakness and frailty to engender dislike. That may be one way to keep clear of undue familiarity, eh? What do you say? Come!"

They betook themselves to the sacristy, where they vested in cassock and surplice; then performed the functions of servers at High Mass, hearing the sermon and satisfying their devotion.





XI.

THE GOLDEN VISION OF A CATHOLIC FUTURE.

"**C**OME home with me, James," said Charles, on leaving the Church after Mass, and after doffing their surplices and cassocks, "and let us have our talk together; you remember we hadn't it last night."

"I remember very well; we had something much better, hadn't we?"

"Well, will you come?" repeated Charles, letting the sly hit go by unnoticed.

"I don't know," was the laconic reply.

"I have quite a number of things to say. Just now, while I was serving, some of them crowded on my mind; and if I dutifully put them away then, you should give me a chance of putting them forth now. And, by-the-by, did you ever observe attentively that picture over the altar in our chapel? Come, pay a visit as we pass by, and look

closely." They had reached the steps under the old black bell; Charles stopped short:—"I should go and see our professor. Johnny told me of his wanting me. Well, let us first visit, then I will step up stairs a moment."

They walked into the Chapel, stayed a few minutes, and on leaving it, Charles asked his friend to wait for him a while under the bell, while he crossed the yard to see his professor. The latter was in his room, his pen in hand; he laid it aside, and received Charles kindly. He said:

"I wanted to say a word to you, Desmond, about some disturbance that is taking place." He laid his pen down, and motioned Charles to a chair by the window, close beside himself. He continued: "You remember my finding fault, a few days ago, with a certain spirit of disunion that was springing up among the boys, all about a miserable football. Big boys, instead of keeping clear of it like men of sense, have taken the lead like true children of nonsense. If the thing were worth while fighting for, they should appeal to the competent authority."

Charles shrugged his shoulders, and his lip curled with a slight smile.

"Yet, I suppose," resumed the professor,

"that if they did recur to competent authority, there would be only one way of managing them efficiently, that is, by keeping them out of harm's way altogether, and assigning one time for them to play, and another time for the little boys. I myself have already expended the weight of my words on discountenancing the clique, and yet the whole thing goes on."

"They spoke to me about the matter," said Charles; "but I showed no interest in it, so they left me alone."

"Well, Charles," answered his professor, "that is pretty much what I expected from your good sense; and it was just to ask you about this very point that I called you."

"Oh, the matter was dead to me, sir, from the moment you passed your judgment upon it."

"Why so, Charles?"

"Considering your responsible position in our regard, your judgment was more than sufficient to set the question on its right footing. I was satisfied."

"Charles," said the professor slowly, and he laid his arm familiarly on the arm of the boy's chair, "this spirit, which you manifest, is the stuff of which obedience is made."

"Obedience, then, is a reasonable virtue," answered the boy, smiling.

"Always so, indeed," rejoined the teacher, "because the reason of obedience is the right which authority has to be respected in thought, word and deed. For all authority is from God, whom we are bound to serve in thought, word and deed. You say well; obedience is a reasonable virtue. You are not the only one to cultivate it. Your friend, James Lambeth, takes the same attitude as yourself; so I should be inclined to believe from the insight I have into his character."

Charles immediately subjoined: "I have just left him down stairs waiting for me. You see him there, sir, across the yard. Shall I call him?"

"Do:—but stay! let us raise the window and signal to him. There, he sees; he is coming." They put the window down and resumed their seats. The professor said, while they waited for the new arrival: "That is an excellent saying—he who obeys derives virtue and influence from him who commands, as the chisel from the hand that holds it. What nerve it does put into life to be conscious of ever drawing strength from a source above,—and that source, God! Obe-

dience is the stamp of a soul's nobility. And you will observe"—he significantly took up the crucifix which lay beside him—"that obedience is the virtue which our Lord signalized, when He was made *obedient* even unto death."

A knock was heard at the door. "Come in." James entered. He was greeted kindly, and, after being requested to take a seat, gave his professor as much pleasure in his answers as Charles had done.

The professor said: "We are in a little sphere—this college life. But depend upon it, my boys, things in a greater sphere—that large world outside the college walls—are exactly the same in character, though larger in scale. What is this matter that I have called you for? It is a question of union among yourselves, and is slightly connected with submission to authority. Well, what are the questions that agitate the world without? Why, nothing else but submission to authority and union of man with man. We are in a little sphere, a small world, a young generation, but one that is a chip of the old block outside there."

"If the agitation outside there," said James, laughing, "is anything like what we have had

here for some days back, it must be fun to enter on public life and see it for ourselves."

"Fun, James, if you mean excitement; but it is an excitement that worries men to death—to the death of states, by not obeying the lawful governments; to the death of families, by not obeying parents; to the death of individual souls, by not obeying the Church and her precepts; yes, and to the death of all Christian society, for the same reason; in a word, James, to the dissolution and sundering of everything that God, by making one thing hang upon another, meant to remain united among themselves and united to Him. He it is who has tied the bond by which the boy hangs on his teacher; no less and no more than He has tied those other bonds between each soul and the Church, between each person and his parents, between each man, or family, or body of men and the state, between all states and the Church. Admit the right of breaking that bond in one case,—in this little College sphere,—and why not in all? So, our doings here have important bearings."

"Yes, sir, that is a very interesting view," answered Charles, well pleased.

"Still more interesting, when you reflect

that, personally, you yourselves have taken the right attitude in this present affair," the professor observed, in a complimentary tone.

"Oh!" replied Charles, in a lively way, "James, here, is death on humbugs!"

"And what are you, pray?" retorted James; "you certainly are not the life of them."

"I hope not," said the professor, laughing.

"I'm sure he is not," responded James; "humbugs would be the most dead-and-alive things out, if they looked to Charlie's sober face for encouragement!"

"Well, this humbug," Charles replied, "nearly fell dead the other day, for all the encouragement you gave it. I merely followed your example, in giving it the cold shoulder."

"How was that?" inquired the professor.

"Why," said Charles, "when they began to talk to us about it, James shrugged his shoulders, and I did the same."

"Who taught you to tell tales out of school?" said James, reproving him.

"Not you," retorted the other, "or you would help me out with the rest of the story."

"Tell me the rest," said the professor.

James here pretended to be mightily huffed at having his secrets told out of school; but Charles went on:

"When James had shrugged his shoulders and pulled a long face, and I had done the same—"

"Not hard for you to do," put in James.

"They went on talking among themselves. Remarked one to the crowd:—'We shouldn't play second fiddle!' and he growled. Remarked another to the crowd:—'We should show that we are men, and stick up for our rights, now that we have got to be philosophers!' Then remarked James to the last speaker,—'As the she-goats said when they got beards!' There was silence for an instant, then a titter, then a laugh. The one whom James had addressed looked daggers, but sat down on the strength of it to study; James, meanwhile, poked the fire, while I helped him by looking on. The rest of the crowd broke off to talking of the debates or of the disputation. And there was an end of the agitation for that recess; while we two leaned against the mantel-piece and laughed in our sleeves."

"Well," said James, forgetting his huff, "the she-goats did good work, considering."

"They butted the commotion clean off the floor," Charles said, laughing.

The Professor observed: "You did well,

and as to the instrument you used—ridicule—it is one that the enemies of what is right and true are constantly using, and with deadly effect. We likewise should know how to use it, though never unjustly. You did well. Rights and fiddlesticks! How strangely obtuse men are! Tell them they have a *right* to this or that, and they understand you perfectly. Tell them they have a *duty* to do this or that, and they are as obtuse as if under a fool's cap. We find that, particularly, in our position. We have to teach. As long as we keep in the region of pure theory, of merely intellectual doctrine, oh! our word weighs for everything,—our long study, our acquired learning, our 'cloth,' as they say, our everything, makes the doctrines go down with our hearers smoothly! But pass over from pure theory to practice, from merely intellectual to moral doctrine, from what they *understand* to what they are to *do*—ah! quite another thing! Happy the man who finds other men doing as they ought! Rare beatitude! except in present company."

The boys smiled at the professor's gracious bow, and Charles said: "This commotion will soon be over, and then the beatitude

will no longer be the rare bird it is; we shall find every one in the college at least doing his duty more freely."

"I hope so," said the master, rising, and the boys, too, rose. "Cultivate the spirit of obedience. Cultivate union among yourselves; this is the seal of Christ's love. By this sign are you known to be His. And you have great need, these times, of being known to be His; most of all by this sign of union among yourselves, insomuch that Catholics are now-a-days forming unions for the special purpose of showing forth this sign to the times, and using it, for it is a famous instrument unto good. In France, in England, in large cities here, there is a movement to form unions—Catholic unions—since individuals have no longer any weight save in the multitude. But these unions do not always succeed. Though all who are called upon to unite are Catholics, yet all have not the Catholic principle of 'one heart' and one soul' sufficiently well developed in them to weld them into close union with others. Too many have a dash of the children of mammon in their composition; not all are purely children of God. Hence only a factitious *unum e pluribus* is

obtained; it has not the intense adhesion of a naturally-grown union round the 'One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism.'

"What kind of naturally-grown union do you mean—would you explain, sir?"

"Certainly, it is only proper, James; for the eyes of young men in your position are opened to deep views of things; you are mewing a mighty youth, I firmly believe—a youth that will develop into robust manhood. But, irrespective of what your future will be, it is still necessary to explain things deeply to those who have once got an inquisitive turn of mind. Either you should not be inquisitive at all in the paths of science, or if you are, you should go the whole lengths of inquiry. Drink deep or taste not. For if you taste and yet drink not deep, you will have started a process of mind which you do not complete; and a broken-off process of mental development is like a broken-off building which you have begun and not finished. It lies open to the rain and to the wind; and the damp moss grows on the walls, and the viper finds its hole in the foundations, and the night-owl hoots in the casement. So it is with an unfinished inquiry after truth; the mind becomes an abode for

venomous errors and damp decay and hooting infidelity. Better the still satisfaction of the unlearned than the agitation of the half-learned. But, ten times better still the peaceful satisfaction of the thoroughly learned; of those who have drunk deep, than of those who have felt no need to taste. You see that learning has a blessing and a curse attached; the blessing is the gem of purest faith serene which the fathomed depth of learning bears; the curse is the fluctuating unsteadiness, which midway currents give, of doubt, scepticism, free-thinking and the like. Oh, that many, many—*all* Catholics—would now, as in the first ages, form themselves into a solid diadem of one heart and one mind, set with the precious jewel of faith, and crown God therewith, instead of the crown of thorns which the wicked world is putting upon Him! One gem of faith for our minds; one vein of piety through our hearts!"

"We would promise it!" exclaimed James warmly, "if only our word would stand for all."

"Would that it did!" answered the professor, with equal warmth, and his eyes gleamed with the lustre of enthusiasm as they rested

on the two youths,—“Would that it did! But each one is left to speak for himself, and the pity is, very few will. It is true the voice of a single extraordinary man, of a master-mind, will sometimes make the multitude speak, will infuse the one spirit into many; but where shall we find the master-mind? And when we have found him and then have lost him—passing to his account like all the rest of us—with whom shall we fill his place?”

“What a great pity!” exclaimed Charles; “so great a good to be had in union!”

“Are not the very differences between mind and mind a considerable gain?”

“Indeed, sir, in our class-matters, where we are certainly in enjoyment of one kind of union, the differences between our minds have at times helped me so much, that I have thought each one sees his own side for himself, and the remainder of the class see for him all the other sides in the bargain.”

“And why not?”—rejoined the professor, with a significant air—“why not prolong your class-union through life? why not take it as the infancy of a life-union? It is an infancy in the bosom of a mother; you take in the one doctrine for your minds, the one

nourishment of piety for your hearts, in the nursing arms of her who is called your Alma Mater. Remember Horace's words: *Densum humeris bibit aure vulgus*; the crowd drink in with their ears, as you sit side by side on the same benches. You pass from the College; why pass from union—a naturally-grown union? You see I have found for you the model of a naturally-grown union—just what I was seeking."

"Certainly," said Charles, "a union is never more naturally grown than on a mother's breast!" For Charles, no illustration ever came more home than what brought in the mention of *mother*.

"No, Charles; and afterwards you have always a centre, and one undisputed. For is it a matter open to dispute where it is that the children, separated though they be, shall have their Christmas reunion? Clearly, around the hearth of their infancy, in the warmth and light of the old log-fire. Where, then, shall the children of the Church meet to have their Christian reunion of the kind we are discussing? Where shall they assemble to act as members of the Church, members of influence in state, city, and parish? Why, around the hearth at which they were

warmed and enlightened in their intellectual infancy, around the old focus of their college teaching; and though their old professors may have passed away, yet new ones, like new fuel, keep up the flame, and warm and enlighten in the same old hearth from generation to generation. If you can keep together in the same sodalities, so much the better; if you can form into the same societies for which your college debating has fitted you, so much the better. And again, so much the better, too, if you find yourselves in different walks of life, in different surroundings, in different connections with state, city, or parish. Happily, a college has never less than the representatives of a whole city. If, now, one college is found in each principal city, they furnish all the elements of a grand national Catholic union, just such a one as mother Church loves to see among her children—one bred in her doctrine, composed of the laity, salted with the ecclesiastical sprinkling—for both orders, lay and ecclesiastical, proceed from the portals of a college. And do not think, my boys, that all this is an airy idea of my own. It seems to have been realized in what I hear of the Xavier Union of New York; and if a

paper read before that Union and published in this excellent Catholic periodical," he took up a magazine from his table, "is a sample of the order of thought therein cultivated,* my scheme of a Catholic union is only the story of what is already existing."

Charles' eyes were steadfastly fixed on the professor's face, even after the latter had stopped speaking. The professor laughed lightly, saying:

"You see, then, quite plainly, that college affairs are only smaller in scale than big things in the world outside; they are not less important in kind. Good morning, now, to both of you. I should like to see you, Charles, just before Mass to-morrow morning."

The boys left the room. The professor, who had risen with them, remained standing. He looked out through the window. That splendid sun which had thrown James into rapture was now totally obscured; not even its whereabouts could be descried through the heavy, murky pall, which was stretched over the sky. A cloud of smoke rolled heavily and tumbled in wreathed confusion

* "Self-Education," a paper read before the Xavier Union of New York, published in the *Catholic World*, May 1874.

through the lower air. The very brick walls around seemed to enclose a prison of sadness, and the light wetting of a recent shower did not relieve the picture. The rain-drops sparkled still where they had fallen on an iron railing or a painted fence. But these things did not engage his eye. He gazed out vacantly.

At once two forms emerged from beneath his window, crossing the yard. He recognized them, the two boys who had just left him. He looked at them and mused:

"Worthy boys, who know their duty and do it! And yet, if they do it ten times as well, still, still are they unprofitable servants. Worthy boys! Great things may rest yet on those shoulders, before they are twenty years older! God bless them! And are they exceptions? Hundreds of boys in this same College have the same chances and circumstances. Yet are these two exceptions? All their fellows enjoy the same teaching, hear the same doctrine, attend the same daily Mass, approach the same Sacrament side by side, visit their Lord many times in the day, live under the same roof with the Blessed Sacrament all the hours they are at school; all are out of the land of

Egypt, and can it be that these two are exceptions in enjoying the fruits of promise? Goodness! And if these are exceptions, what are the rest? And if the rest are still more unprofitable, what is yonder poor world that lies outside the gate! Is there anything—is there anything at all in this dismal day to liken that poor world to!" —It was indeed gloomy; yet the clouds seemed too bright, and the smoke not heavy enough to bear comparison with yonder dark mass, so dark in God's sight,—the World; which, like its mother, that dull, cloddy earth below, could sparkle with the heaven-dropped dew of genius, but, like that same cloddy earth below, could form therewith only mud and mire; and out of truth form falsehood, and out of liberty, license; mud and mire which the sons of Catholics *should* pass over, but—do they, without being bespattered? —"Sons of Catholics! even *they* don't know what it is to be born! They don't know yet what it is to live; still less what it will be to die. And even they at times carp at the soul that offers to help them, and snap at the hand which is stretched out to them; and they splutter in the face which is turned to them only because it is turned towards

God and finds them in its onward way to Him. And they kick and rear like the senseless beasts, in which there is no understanding—*quibus non est intellectus—non intellectus!* They did so before to One higher than ourselves. The servants are not above their Master!" He was silent; then turned to resume the work at which Charles had found him.

Meanwhile the two boys pursued their way. James had now consented to accompany Charles home. The old servant admitted them.

"And sure," she said, "I am glad to see you. A couple of sunstreaks at a dark hour! Are you wet?"

"No, thank you, Mary; we know how to take care of ourselves."

"Then, if you do, you'll get on well in the world. And if you'll go on taking care of one another, ye'll get on better still. I've seen more than one fine young lad going astray for want of a breast like his own to lean upon." They entered the dining-room; no one was there yet. She went on: "There was a fine young lad that I knew; he could find no play at home, no friend of his own standing, as it were, to refresh himself with

innocently. Edward knew him, and, if he is still alive, he must remember Edward. What do you think became of him? He put his face out of doors to seek for occupation. He didn't find that in his books. He didn't look for it. He must have sought out some acquaintance, some Turk, and caught a Tartar. And where both of them are, the Lord knows! But his mother, God bless her holy soul! I know where she is. Every morning, during Mass, at the foot of the altar; every afternoon, from three o'clock till four, keeping guard of Honor before the Blessed Sacrament! And if the Sacred Heart does not restore her son, it is because Our Lord has done something better for him. But if the Lord does restore her son, I know of one, Charlie, who'll not have to be thanked for it."

Charles' curiosity was excited; but his mother entered.





XII.

A BROKEN SHAFT.

WHEN dinner was over, the party, which consisted of only three, Mrs. Desmond, Charles and James Lambeth, moved to an adjoining apartment; but on the way, Charles slipped aside to see Mary, the old domestic, and asked her:

"Who was that you were speaking of, when mamma came in and interrupted you? You said he knew Edward."

"Come and sit down for awhile, if you want to know; it will do you good." She drew him into the chamber, where the ensigns of her housekeeping office hung displayed all around, and, in these homely surroundings, with a still more homely style, she said: "I'll tell you all I know."

But as she did not know all the story then, we will forego the pleasure of hearing her motherly conversation with Charles—for she acted towards him as a second mother—and we shall give the story in its own outlines.

A certain lady of the city had, some ten years before, been converted to the Catholic Church. Her husband, Mr. Markman, was already dead. Her son, Henry, was then eleven years old; and in him all her affections were centred. No sooner was she converted than she sent Henry to the Catholic College in which Charles Desmond is now being brought up. The boy rose through the lower classes, bright, lively, gifted; he seemed to excel in everything. Just then Edward Desmond, the elder brother of Charles, was sent to the same College; but his education had already been conducted elsewhere; and, being now nearly completed, had only to be finished off in the higher classes. The school at which Edward had thus far been was a non-Catholic one, a fact very significant in the matter of morals. Young Henry Markman, with his personal qualities, very soon attracted the eye of Edward; and little Harry soon became conscious that he was the object of special attention in that quarter. Naturally he was attracted in turn; and, in spite of wonted vigilance on the part of superiors, the little fellow, on whom innocence was stamped as on an angel, and the old boy, on whom the

world had already told, crossed that bridge of intercourse, which must ever be kept strictly guarded, if the young boys at school are to be saved from the elder ones. The intercourse soon told upon the younger, for when two persons meet, there must be a compromise of some kind before they can enjoy perfect union; and the weaker in mind generally takes to following the stronger, the gentle to following the bolder, the admired one to following his admirer, the flattered and affectionate one to following and leaning on his flatterer.

One day, Harry was practising a speech in class. He was already sensibly changed, as his master with sadness observed; instead of being gentle, affectionate, docile and obliging, as he used to be, he showed airs now; and the reason was, as his master divined, because his gentleness and his affections had gone along with his weakness — whither? To lean on the breast and make an idol of Edward! On the present occasion Harry was declaiming; he had the makings of a good speaker in him; he came to these lines:

“’Tis the sunset of life gives me mystical lore,
And coming events cast their shadows before.”

The master stopped him:

"You do not express the sentiment properly there. Let the eye and countenance bespeak the possession of that mystical lore; and, as to the coming events casting their shadows before, let the hand help out the idea of the events approaching with their shadows preceding. Thus." He showed the boy how to do it. "Now try again."

The boy repeated, but in precisely the same way as he himself had done the first time.

"No!" exclaimed his professor. "The way you use your hands, and the want of expression in your face, would almost express an idea of this kind:

*"'Tis the sunset of life gives me bodily power,
And coming events fall thick as a shower."*

There was a general laugh through the class-room. "Do it thus," resumed the master, and he repeated it as he had directed previously. "Do you see the difference?"

"Yes, sir," the boy replied sulkily.

"Well, let us see; again!"

The boy repeated, but not a whit better than before.

"You seem to have lost your wits this evening, Markman."

"Oh!" rejoined the boy, surlily, "I guess I know how to do it."

There was an ominous silence through the class-room, while the professor fixed a steady look on the impertinent youth, a look under which the latter quailed.

"Markman," said he, "you are changed; and unless you recover quickly, your change will lead to your ruin. Go now to your place!"

When class was over, he called Harry.

"Are you conscious, Harry, of not being quite the same as you used to be?"

"I don't know," answered the boy, keeping his eyes away from his professor's.

"I am sorry, very sorry, my dear boy—you are much changed, and I am afraid you will not do what I want you—I want you to keep clear of bigger boys than yourself, of all except your own classmates. Do you associate much with your own classmates?"

"I suppose so;" not yet had the professor caught his eye, to read his soul through and manage him effectively.

"Do you keep much with boys outside of your own class?"

"Sometimes;" his eye was doggedly fixed down.

"Have you anything to do with Edward Desmond?"

Harry looked up from the ground, glanced at a couple of pictures on the wall, and again doggedly looked down. Neither his tongue nor his eye responded to his professor this time. Such a question! The idea of trespassing on the sacred ground of his conduct!

"Well, Markman," resumed his professor, "I would recommend you to beware of him; he does not suit you, as your conduct has already proved. That will do." The unhappy boy turned on his heel without a word!

"Hallo! my little Harry!" exclaims Edward Desmond within three minutes afterwards, and as he speaks his arm is around that unfortunate boy's neck, and fondling him on that blooming cheek, where innocence and purity have thus far rested, as we know they did rest on St. Aloysius' features, so majestically indeed that the mere sight of him inspired the beholders with sentiments of purity. "Well, what's the latest?"

"Edward," said the boy, looking up with his bright eyes, "my professor was scolding me for going with big boys; he mentioned you."

"So you have been lectured, Harry, have you?" asked Edward, with eager inquiry.

"Yes," answered the little fellow, not now averting his eyes, as he had done with his professor, but feeding them on the look and smile of his flatterer.

"Come this way, Harry, there are too many boys about here. Well, what did you say?"

"I said nothing."

"Bravo! my little fellow," and Edward fondled him under the chin; "don't let yourself be bullied. Be a man." And the big boy trifled with the little boy as if the latter were a baby-in-arms and the former a stupid old nurse. And he talked nonsense, playing on the silly child's heart-strings, and he had the best of it against that silly child's wise professor. And whatever traits of manliness were beginning to adorn Harry's character, each one of these was Edward Desmond beginning to remove; and whatever features of noble virtue were being traced in Harry's soul by his master, each one of these was just as soon effaced by the daubing hand of Edward, who stood in the back-ground. Edward had the best of it, because he had the boy's heart. The professor had the

worst of it, because he had only the boy's mind.

And so time passed, while the professor, like an angel of light, flashed the truth from time to time on Harry Markman's eyes; and Edward, during the same time, like a spirit of darkness, moving behind the scenes, bade the boy shut his eyes. Harry has now learnt to dislike the same things which before he loved. He has begun to fall in his class, and is growing disgusted with the whole thing. His professor has read his soul; the devil gives him a hearty dislike for the said professor. His heart, some time ago, was set high on a college career and college honors, and, after college—ah! something nowise ordinary. Now, his heart has fallen far below these,—on the face, and the look, and the smile, and the simper of a boy older indeed than himself, but far more foolish on the first day of their intercourse, than he, silly child! is now after eleven weeks of the same.

And alas! what is more than all these, he used to have a special hour during which he offered up his actions in union with the Sacred Heart, keeping guard, as it were, in Its honor. His was the hour from six to seven o'clock in the morning, the first after

his waking. Moreover, he had learnt the practice of weekly communion, and his confessor was a real spiritual director to him, one who knew him well and directed him like an attentive father. And now?

Now, instead of one hour of guard, he keeps on guard, morning, noon and night. Before whom—God? No, indeed, but before Edward. All his thoughts are flung around the devil's agent—Edward! With respect to weekly communion—oh! now, he has a headache one Saturday, and does not go to confession; he is quite busy another Saturday; he is something else on other Saturdays, and so he excuses himself to his once tender conscience. And when now, once in three weeks, he does go to confession, any confessor will do—in fact will do better than his old one. Because, you see, his own old one is the only one that knows him!

Poor Harry! to make a long story short, he left college that same year. Edward finished his course a year after. The two met outside, neither now a college boy; but the charm of their intercourse had disappeared. The devil had done one part of his work through Edward's agency, so he let that agency slip out of existence,

Charles Desmond, who was listening to the old domestic's narrative, was not altogether unacquainted with Henry Markman, for Charles had begun his career in the lowest class of the college before Henry left. But he had been unacquainted with the causes of Harry's departure, and the connection of Edward therewith. However, Charles had something more to do with the immediate consequences of young Markman's departure from school, as we shall now see.

A few days after the sad event of Harry's leaving school, Mrs. Markman came to see Mrs. Desmond. They were already known to one another. Both were intimately concerned in the present affair. Clasping Mrs. Desmond's hand, the mother of Harry told of the boy's recent determination to leave school, of the change in his manners, of every circumstance that went to form part of his unexpected, crushing failure. It was not with dry eyes she told the story, and soon she could not proceed on account of the tears and sobs which, breaking from a mother's heart, choked her utterance. It was not with dry eyes that Mrs. Desmond listened, and understood that the college authorities had ascribed Markman's failure

to his intercourse with Edward Desmond. And when Mrs. Markman interrupted her recital, unable to proceed through the sobs and throes of a mother's broken heart, she pressed the hand which she held in hers; she pressed it to her lips, and watered it with her own tears: "I, too, am the mother of a lost son," she murmured, but could not go on for her weeping. When the violence of her grief subsided a little, Mrs. Markman tried to resume:

"I meant him to be the gift of my faith to the altar of God, to stand beside my death-bed as a priest, and help"—but her grief burst out as violent as before, and her friend's heart beat convulsively with the pangs of a double grief. O Edward!

A sudden resolution was formed by Mrs. Desmond. She arose from her seat, pulled the bell rope, and went to the door of the room to wait for the servant who attended. When the servant came, she said:

"Send Charles here."

The servant obeyed, and Mrs. Desmond resumed her seat beside the forlorn lady. After a delay, the room door opened and the little boy, then only eleven years old, entered quickly to see what his mother

wanted. The two ladies were facing the fire place, and Mrs. Desmond, looking around, beckoned him silently forward. He came timidly. Mrs. Markman had not recovered from her paroxysm of grief, and Charles saw that his mother's eyes were red with weeping. The little boy's heart melted within him, and when his mother, taking his hand, enclosed it in Mrs. Markman's, his sympathy showed itself in two tearful blue eyes, that glanced from one lady to the other, and then in two tears that trickled silently down his lovely cheeks. Mrs. Markman, feeling the new hand in hers, removed the handkerchief from her face, and the two, the lovely boy and the sorrowful lady, looked at one another. The flow of her tears was checked; she stooped forward and kissed him on the forehead. Mrs. Desmond said:

"Charles, I owe Mrs. Markman a debt; will you pay it for me?"

"Oh, yes, mamma," he threw his arms around his mother's neck and kissed her.

"Will you do whatever you can for Harry, her son?"

"Oh, yes, yes; what shall I do?"

"We don't know yet; but you will do it?"

"Yes, dearest mamma."

And Mrs. Markman drew the boy to her, and left the impress of her lips upon his brow. How like her own Harry, one year before! and the thought of her Harry brought back the flood of her grief.

A year passed, and the boy who would not be a student had done nothing. He was restless, refused all occupation that was offered, was ungenerous to his mother, neglected everything except his own whims. The mother's heart was torn. She prayed to the Sacred Heart; and her daily hour of guard spent in the Church, before the Blessed Sacrament from three till four o'clock, was an hour of daily supplication for Harry. One day she returned home at half-past four; the housekeeper met her at the door, evidently with news of importance:

"Harry left home,"—the mother started,—
"about an hour ago."

"Left home! how?" inquired Mrs. Markman, quickly.

"He went, ma'am, dressed up as if for travelling, with a valise in his hand, and he told me to inform you. I tried to stay him till you returned. But he would not; he is gone!"

"Oh my God!" the mother faintly ejacu-

lated; as if every spark of life and feeling had gathered in agonizing anguish and shot a pang through her heart, she stood stone-still a moment, and then, scarce commanding nerve to stand, she rested heavily on the good maid, who was pale with fright at the consequence of her abrupt information, and she laid her hand against the wall to save herself from falling; then, a moment more, and a flood of tears came to relieve her overcharged heart, and she merely murmured: "Gone without seeing me! O sweetest Heart of Jesus!" She prayed silently as she slowly made her way to the nearest apartment.

What befell Harry Markman, after this wicked severing of himself from his mother, it took years to reveal; but thus they stand.

It was a lovely day in April, twenty days after the abrupt departure of the widow's son, and there was seated on the topmost step of a stone flight, which ran up the side of a pier in Liverpool, a gentlemanly youth of fifteen years of age. The wind was stirring enough to cover the broad bosom of the Mersey with a glancing variety of wavelets and little billows; and the life of commerce, which is the spirit of that seaport, was in its

usual activity, spreading over those waters the shipping of the world, while up and down, on this side of the river, forests of masts rose towering along the seven miles of docks, which form the river facings of Liverpool. On the other side, another such view; and beyond rose the hills of Cheshire. In front, midway out in the river, there was riding at anchor a large dark-colored packet, freshly arrived from New York. It was from it our young stranger had just landed; he was the widow's wandering boy, Harry Markman.

To be on land once more was to recover from the sickness and the weakness of the sea voyage; and to recover his wonted state of body was to call back the gush of life, which made him wide-awake to his position and keenly alive to his conscience. What was he doing here? He looked around and everything was so grand; however he had seen some grand things ere now. He looked around, everything was so new; he had never seen England before this. He looked around, and he felt so strange; he had never left his mother's side before. He looked down, and his face fell; never before had he committed such a sin against God, against her,

in disposing of himself thus; and he felt so miserable as he had never felt before. He rose from the stone step, and stood and looked with tearful eyes towards the far-off horizon and far beyond, where, thousands of miles away, he had left his mother three weeks before, left her without the exchange of his love, without her leave, without her blessing. The waves washed against the pier and up the stone steps; he heeded them not. The landing-stages swarmed, and the ferry-boats plied, and the great ships weighed anchor to move with the ebbing tide, and the sun smiled on that scene of life with all its commercial grandeur; but the widow's boy looked wistfully forth, and he felt miserably lonely.

He roused himself and moved away. He threaded his way past the frontier of docks into the town beyond. It was the land side of the same scene—life and bustle and thronging wagons, and a city built to the needs and proportions of wealth that flooded like the tide. He passed through the Custom-house, and he entered the great George's Hall; he stood by the halberdiers in the Courts of Assizes, and by the merchant princes on the Exchange; and here the press

of business made him feel out of employ; and there, where the seats were vacant, the organ silent, the architecture grand, and the frescoing noble, he felt that art smiled not for him; and elsewhere he saw that he had shut the law upon himself, for he was a failure in his studies; and even competence did not seem within his reach. How so? Why so? For a whim and out of a foolish affection, long since forgotten, but now most sadly experienced in its remote effects!

He walked on, and after hours of threading the swarming river-side thoroughfares, he arrived at the sea-side extremity of the city of docks and basins. There, at the distant end of a newly-built basin, which looked like a large inland lake, he sat down lonely and alone. Liverpool lay behind him; the Mersey came no farther; the Irish Sea, to his right, stretched far away before him, and on the horizon's edge a column of smoke rose or a white sail gleamed, and down the channels between the sand-banks steamed the tugs and ships. But they were all distant from him; he felt lonely and alone.

"I will go back to my mother!" he exclaimed in anguish.

The tears gushed forth and he buried his

face in his hands; and then he glanced furtively up with his red eyes to see if any one observed him. But no one was near, no one within shouting distance, and he felt miserably lonely. There was no one to love him, and, if he died there, no one to pity him!

He could not stand that. He made his way back to the ship in which he had come. He had partly paid his way, partly served it. Bad example, which he had witnessed, had set him on this wild path of life. He now returned to New York, serving for wages aboard. But now the sea had not the same disturbing effect upon his system. Before he touched America again, he had come to feel somewhat at home, had lost his feelings of loneliness and of consequent repentance. And so he began a seafaring life, exciting enough in its moments of activity, but sad in the many hours of leisure; and during all that time he never dropped a line to his mother. Five years after, he has been over much of the world, and has little in his pocket; he has consumption in his lungs from exposure on shore, and he holds the standing of a common seaman. He is once more on a steamer from Liverpool to New York,—a pale, broken-down youth of twenty.

It is a gusty night, and he stands leaning against the mizzen-mast, unobserved by three passengers, two of whom are walking up and down, the third seated by the skylight. He is watching the binnacle, in which the compass marks the ship's course; and the oil-lamp, which lights up the compass, lights up his face—but he is not observed. Suddenly a familiar name is dropped:

“Edward Desmond is his name, you say?”

Markman listened, but the lurching of the ship caused the two speakers to go below, and the third gentleman, too, after a somewhat ludicrous accident described before, was likewise forced to descend.

On that same night Mrs. Desmond was listening to the conversation of her two sons, beside the cheery fire of her home, and she looked uneasily out of the window as if the east wind bore tidings not of good omen.

On that same night, Harry Markman heard no more of Edward Desmond; but he dreamt; and his dreams, though dreamt by a youth of twenty summers, were as the dreams of an aged man that had seen eighty winters; that had lived a long time and walked hard ways; that had followed his own will—and what had his will profited

him? And there, see! at the beginning of his long erring life stands the gloomy figure of one whom Satan had magnetized to attract Harry, and to handle and maltreat and ruin the unsuspecting, innocent child. And the devil's agent succeeded and got the devil's pay—a curse from God. And so had Harry. With that, the boy awoke, trembling and weeping. His Guardian Angel, too, bent over him and wept.





XIII.

THE OLD MAN'S BLESSING.

SUCH was the story which Mary told Charles about the gifted but unfortunate Harry Markman. Meanwhile, in the sitting-room, James Lambeth was bearing Mrs. Desmond company and carrying on a conversation as if with his own mother and entirely on his ground. In fact, he carried it where he liked, and while the good lady listened and smiled, and the finger work sped on in her hands, it seemed that he was carrying his conversation right into the heart of his enemy's country—to judge by its effect upon the cat. For, somehow or other, pussy grew very lively, and assaulted James; and, not without provocation, we presume, seated herself on his shoulder, and purred in his ear. He purred back at her.

“Has Charles much to say at school?” asked Mrs. Desmond, “or does he keep to himself?”

"Charles, ma'am?" said James, and he glanced at the door; "he has mighty little to say in study-time."

"Well, at other times?"

"He is fair enough, if he feels at home with one."

"And if not?"

"Then he minds his own business, unless he can do a good turn."

"Is he liked?" asked the lady.

"Yes, but respected rather."

"What is that for?"

"Well, for his piety," answered James.

"So that is observed, is it?"

"Indeed it is, ma'am; as I felt to my cost one day, when going around in his stead, to give a notice to some of the boys about a certain devotion; one said: 'Oh, see our Aloysius of to-day!' I tried to be grave and modest, as my office for the moment required, but it was of no use; they said to me: 'You are in the wrong box! Where's Charles Desmond?'"

The mother was highly pleased. Just then the door opened and Charlie walked in.

"Hallo, Charlie!" exclaimed his friend; "I was just saying—Where's Charlie Desmond?"

"Here," answered the delinquent.

"Where *have* you been?" asked the other, grasping him by the arm.

"Where have you been?" inquired his mother.

"I was with Mary"—began the absentee's excuse.

"In a council of war!" ejaculated James.

"No,—she told me a story. That is all."

"That is not all," said James, persistently.

"The next thing is, what was the story?"

"Oh!" answered Charles, "it was only a chapter of common sense. Do you want to be accommodated? Come, then, let us take a walk. Any objection, mother?"

"None whatever, my boys; away with you, and come to terms."

To say the truth, none could be on better terms than those two boys, and she knew it well. She knew the character of her son's friend, and admired him. She was well aware that friendship, when true, is one of the main supports of human life; and it is true then, when persons are well suited in age and condition of life, and proper distance is maintained in all their intercourse. Let the times and places of meeting be such as common life affords; and their friendship,

without freezing, will be kept at a healthy temperature. Mrs. Desmond was a pious and practical lady, who had a lively fear of the dangers besetting social intercourse. Too far apart was better than too near—such is the weakness of human beings. There is a plain flower which should grow no less in the elegant garden of friendship, than in the open field of social intercourse; that flower is “Touch-me-not.” Touch me not, whether I be the foul pitch of vice, which he that touches is defiled by; or be the purest oil that was ever lit before the Tabernacle, or the sweetest incense that ever burnt upon the altar of the Lord. You will be soiled; you will be burnt. Touch me not; for if I be a rose, then I have real thorns; and if I have them not, I am a sham rose. Beautiful flowers add to one another’s beauty by proximity, but not too near! for each must have its own, or both are spoiled. And when the bloom of a soul is faded, who will restore it, seeing that it surpasses the lily of the field as far as the lily passes Solomon in all his glory.

There was, indeed, in the two youths that likeness which is the foundation of friendship, but also that diversity wherein resides

its utility blended with its beauty. The unity of their likeness lay in their goodness and uprightness; the variety was observed in James' bluntness and Charles' delicacy, so much matter of fact on one side and matter of feeling on the other; the one's common sense and the other's uncommon cast of mind; the one's plainness and boldness of design forming the strongest of structures, the other's finished tracery delighting angels and men. But both did eminently agree in this, that while, in the fear of God, they neglected nothing, whether of good to do, or of evil to shun, they both presented a perfect subject on which the Spirit of God could work, moulding and framing them into man made divine. What a contrast to the "half-a-Catholic!"

They took their way towards an undulating park, where, seating themselves on a bench at a turn in the winding road, they enjoyed a view of the broad river beneath. The afternoon was somewhat cheerless; the clouds of the morning still moved over the sky, gently but tearfully. On the opposite side of the river the water rose far up the bank, above which there extended a stretch of land rolling back till it mounted into

bluffs, and so bounded the horizon. Many a villa topped many a hill along the bank and over the plain, the foot of which was washed by the river as it flowed around the curve. On the left, it came into sight, turning a majestic bend; on the right it passed away under the great bridges and around another turn. Steamers and rafts rested on the broad bosom of the water, while some few wended their way, swiftly or slowly, according to the river's flow. Spring had not yet clothed the landscape in green; the earth looked barren and dull; the ground underfoot was damp; and under those clouds, so chill and tearful, Charles felt dreary. But James said:

"How things do change over the earth! One winter follows another in a ceaseless rolling round. Never the same—never constant, except in its constant changing!"

Charles signified his assent to the observation.

"And that shows, too," resumed the other, "that however long the winter may seem, it must change for a spring and a summer."

"Yes," responded Charles, "and even in the very blast of winter there is ever rest and warmth to be found somewhere." He

stopped, but inwardly he thanked God for the warmth to be found in the bosom of a friend.

They moved away back to the park entrance. As they approached the massive arch, there appeared just over the gateway the country-seats and houses which topped the hill a mile beyond, and which seemed to be resting, like a fairy city in miniature, on the summit of the arch. James called his companion's attention to the scene; but Charles seemed dull and unimpressible; so they passed on.

Again they are down in the murky cloud which forms the city atmosphere. They have come to a crossing. On the other side of the street stands a poor lame cripple, who is striving to come safely down from the high pavement. All the time that the two boys are on their way across, the poor cripple is attempting the descent in vain. With a spring they reach him, and supporting him on either side, they help him over till he is safe on the opposite pavement. James extends his hand with all the coins he has hastily collected in the bottom of his pocket; but Charles, likewise, holds forth his hand, and, depositing his share with that of his

friend, makes the latter the almsgiver for both. The old man was beside himself in his attempts to thank the two Christian boys:

"Oh, sure, God bless both o' ye, a thousand times over! Oh, Mary the Holy Virgin bless ye!"

"Pray for us," said Charles, in a low voice; and away they went. But the old man's blessing had already descended upon them.

How suddenly it does descend! most suddenly when the work that calls it down is lowly. We have bruised a little seed; there is diffused at once an extraordinary odor. We have thrown a dull-looking grain of incense on the glowing coal; our sense is greeted with the odor of sweetness. We have stooped; and we pick up God's grace lying on our path. We have opened to the knock; and there walks in no stranger, but God.

The old man's blessing was already on the youths. As they stepped up on the opposite pavement, each felt better for those last few moments' work than for the whole afternoon besides. Their souls were opened; their hearts warmed—warmed towards God and towards one another.

James asked abruptly:

"Why are you so sad of late, my dear Charlie?"

"James," answered the other slowly, and turning his eyes for a moment full upon his friend, "I was not sad this morning."

"No, I did not think so."

"When one is in the sanctuary," resumed Charlie, "and kneels before the altar, and feels himself in the great temple of God, and all his spirit moved with the harmony of Divine service—who could be sad then, James, when all around is so festive?"

"I myself," answered the other, warmly, "never was so then."

"No; for you feel that your mind can shine brighter than those lights, and your heart burn warmer than the fire in the censer. One's soul can be a temple—with its multitude of powers, senses and affections, its acts of humility and love—a sanctuary of undefiled purity."

"You surprise me, Charlie," said his friend, taking his hand tenderly; "with such a treasure of consoling thought in your mind, what could upset you?"

"The reverse—other thoughts as different as black from white. Those lights can go out, and the harmony be hushed; the multi-

tude can scatter, and nothing but the sanctuary lamp bear a silent witness; and when a gust or a blast can blow that out, and perhaps has already done so—isn't it sad, James?"

"Oh, Charlie, but what can blow out the lamp of a soul, which is its own free good will?"

The other continued without answering:

"The voice of the preacher echoed in one's ears long after it had ceased in the Church; and he painted so vividly that the glory of Mary lay in her sufferings, in resembling the thorn-crowned Heart of her Son, that I took you to see the picture of the latter, and my fanciful temples and flickering flames began to die away."

"Well, Charlie, that may be right; but what ground for sadness here, except a fanciful one? If the soul seems a temple, let the lights go out, and the harmony die away in the vaults above; let the multitude have departed, and the day itself, with its cheery rays, go down. Let your dismal picture be a reality, and darkness and danger come on with the night, and the wind create a thousand noises down through the lonely aisles, with moanings and footsteps and the light-

ning flash. A dreadful picture to be sure! One's sanctuary is on the point of being invaded by a thousand fearful foes; yet if the will still burns, the whole temple is safe and is the abode of God; and may be much more so, than if the sun were streaming through the figures of Saints, and the harmony pealing amid the murmurs of the multitude to stir one's soul in the sanctuary."

These words touched a chord that vibrated somewhere in Charlie's heart, and he acknowledged it by just a slight pressure of the hand which still held his, as they walked along. James was delighted.

"Does that please you?" he asked. "You make me happy, and I am almost inclined to make merry with you, seeing you are on the way home with me."

Charles looked up: "How is that? Have I missed my road?"

"No harm in that," answered the other, "unless you think it harm to go home with me."

"Oh, no; but—"

"But what? Come along!"

"Well, with pleasure;" and with pleasure Charles resigned himself to his fate. They chatted pleasantly, and on arriving at Mr.

Lambeth's house, the young visitor was received cordially,—so cordially indeed, that an investigation was set on foot to discover what reasons he had for denying them this pleasure oftener. He had not visited them for so many weeks or months—they did not reckon the precise number—but clear it was to all that no one had fingers enough to count them. The young folks grew excited. Charles defended himself against so much prejudice; but so many eyes were scrutinizing his conduct from so many sides, that—his call for fair-play being completely overruled—his elder judges pronounced him shy, and his younger ones did the same, and a tiny little sister of James',—whether judge or juryman was not clear,—tried to clasp Charlie's hand in both of hers and exclaimed pathetically—"Charles shy!" This was too much for the guilty youth; he gave up all defence, and solemnly promised reformation. And thus he was in a state of great humility and penitence, when he observed that supper was over and the shades of night were falling. He rose and took leave of the family, all of whom knew him well enough to admire him: he was the bosom friend of their own James.

On returning home, he held a few minutes converse with his mother, in whose heart, as he retired to study, a desire arose and was checked. She desired to inquire of him and find out a wound, which, with a mother's instinct, she felt was somewhere, and into which, with a mother's love, she longed to pour her balm. But she thought rightly:

"Wait, wait; the soul's stages are as the ripening fruit on the trees; wait, and it will fall off, or yield to the slightest touch."





XIV

TRUE AND FALSE FRIENDSHIP

THE second day was passing after our last scene, and Charles sat beside the fire which kept the wintry chill out of the apartment. His sister was busy with Berlin wools, and a glance or two which she directed at Charlie betrayed that she had some design on him. So near her work-table—it really seemed incongruous that he should be musing and half dreaming! She observed:

“You were in a great hurry yesterday to get away to school.”

“Yes, Emmy,” answered he, “my professor wanted to see me before Mass.”

“What for?” she inquired, with her inborn spirit of enterprise to know as much as she could about everything whatsoever.

“It was about a piece of writing he wished me to do.”

"Oh, you are always writing or reading," she replied; "just come and hold this skein of Berlin for me, while I roll it up; I cannot manage it on these chairs."

Charles looked cautiously at the pile of wool that glowed like a rainbow, heaped up before her. "You seem to have more than one skein there," he said.

She did not hear this remark, but quite innocently said, "Come!" She held out a quantity of one color for him to put around his wrists, while she should roll it up into a ball.

Charlie said nothing, but like a man he went over to her, and seating himself on the table, held out his hands; and she put on the handcuff of wool.

Her fingers began to ply and to roll; and her tongue began to ply and her language to roll, and—

"Charlie," she said, "what are you going to write?"

"Something about philosophy," answered he, with manly reticence.

"Humph!" said she. "Well, did your professor say anything else,—you have a good deal to do with him."

"I should think I had!"

"But, I mean out of class. He said nothing else than about your philosophy?"

"Oh, yes," answered the bright youth, who, it must be confessed, labored under a sad defect—he would never say at once all he knew about a thing; but his poor sister had to put twenty questions to get out of him what she herself could tell in half-a-minute, without being asked at all! It is a piece of stupidity inherent in the whole race of boys. Charlie went on deliberately:—"The professor stood with me at a window, and we saw the boys passing in through the yard, on their way to the school-room."

"Well," she ejaculated, inquiringly.

"Well, as they passed in, they went almost universally to visit the Blessed Sacrament in their chapel; and he praised the spirit of piety which reigns now in the College; and he said that each of the elder boys could keep it up by word and example; and a little good influence thus spent would bear its fruit in the future, when so many of these boys should have become men, fathers of families, priests, lawyers, and so forth."

"Ah! I see," she said. "Do you exert a good influence?"

"How should I know?" he replied.

"Just hold your hands so," she rejoined, poising his hands and wrists for him, according to the principle of least resistance and greatest speed.

He submitted like a lamb, according to the principle of obeying the higher powers.

"What will be the next great thing at the College?"

"Well, he replied, "the Retreat will come in a couple of weeks; we are near Holy Week now."

"Do you like a Retreat, Charles?"

"I don't think I dislike it."

"Oh, but that silence, Charlie,—keeping silence for three whole days! I cannot bear it."

"Of course you like to talk, Emmy?"

"Of course I do; what else were we made for, I'd like to know?"

"The catechism doesn't say so; it says, for God."

"Yes," she answered emphatically, "but we were meant to talk also; how should we know God, if we didn't ask questions? how could we love Him, if we didn't tell our neighbors how good it is to do so?"

"But you can do all that, Emmy, and yet keep silence for three days."

"Oh!—do keep your hands steady—finished in a minute—there one skein finished!"

"*One* skein!" ejaculated the captive youth.

"Here's another," she said, complacently, and she arranged another; and she held out his hands, and she put the new handcuff on. "Just so!"—and the poor brother hadn't a word to say in the matter. Poor brotherhood! so imposed upon!

"Well?" she said, as if she meant to keep her tongue agoing.

"Well," repeated he, "what else would you like to know?"

"Charlie"—she was going to coax something out of him, so she repeated still more tenderly—"Charlie, what will you become?"

"What will become of me?" he echoed. "I hope I am not going to get drowned—that's one thing—"

"Oh, I mean, what should you like to be—some great profession, I hope." She looked very sweet.

"Yes, Emmy, some great profession—that means getting and keeping up a large establishment of nephews and nieces—particularly nieces—for your special benefit, eh?"

"Why, Charlie, you are growing to be quite a man—eighteen years of age! You

will get a mustache soon." And her laugh rang out aloud.

"Is that all the profession you dream of for me?"

"Oh, no, Charlie; but what is it, tell me, that you dream of for yourself. You won't become one of those old fogies you are always reading and studying—philosophers and orators."

"Look here, Emmy; you ask me what great profession I'll choose; and you go on straightway to cry down the great professions. Shall I bind myself over to you to buy bonnets for you?"

"No, get away with you!"

"Ribbons, eh?"

"No—I want you to be a *man*. I shouldn't mind if I saw you a priest, Charlie, standing in a pulpit and preaching."

"You shouldn't mind, eh? I should, Emmy."

"That is, Charlie, I shouldn't object to it much."

"Not much! I should very much, if that is what you mean by being a priest—stand in a pulpit and preach. Why *you* could become a priest, at that rate,—stand on an ottoman and talk by the hour!"

"But don't priests keep silence, too?"

"Of course, any amount of it."

"Now I couldn't do that, Charlie," she said, mournfully.

"I knew that already, sissy," he answered, consolingly.

"But don't become a priest, Charlie."

"Why not?"

"You would have to become so holy,—I couldn't speak to you any more."

"Is holiness repulsive, Emmy? Did you ever see a holy man who wasn't amiable—whom you shouldn't like to cling to?"

"That's true!" said she.

"Does that change your ideas, sissy? Well, change your ideas about philosophers and orators and the like; they are not such bears as you think. Am I becoming a bear?"

She opened her eyes: "Charlie a bear!"

"I don't mean to say that I am becoming a philosopher; only I have a good deal to do with that sort of thing."

"Well, become something great, Charlie."

"I'll become a great talker if I trust myself much with you."

"Don't trust yourself to me, dear Charlie. I am a silly little creature."

"You are no such thing, Emmy, unless

you stop saying your prayers for your big brother."

"You are not my big brother, Charlie; you are my little one."

"Well, for your little one and your big one together."

"Yes, dearest Charlie," and a couple of tears stood in the silly little creature's eyes, as she turned them, full of affection, on him. He smiled.

Just then the wool stopped going at its greatest speed. A thread had slipped that careless brother's hands, and was entangling the rest. She proceeded cautiously. It became worse. She grew solicitous. He was pretty tired, and he hoped—but we'll spare the reader the shock of hearing what he hoped—mischievous race of boys! She uttered a sound of anguish from between her compressed lips. He tried not to laugh.

"Oh, Charlie, Charlie!" she ejaculated, woefully.

"Now forgive me, sissy."

"I do forgive you, Charlie."

"Charles! Charles!" was heard from without the room.

"Here!" answered he.

A servant entered: "Mother wants you."

"Well, Charlie," said Emily, "I'll unravel this by myself. Thank you. Are you tired?"

"A little," he replied; "but welcome, Emmy."

He went off to his mother's apartment.

"Sit down," said Mrs. Desmond, "unless you are otherwise engaged."

"Not at all, mamma."

"Then read for me, will you, while I work."

"With pleasure;" he took the *Devout Life of St. Francis de Sales*, and seated beside his mother, he opened at where last she had left off, and read.

* * * * *

"Charles," said his mother, interrupting him, "would you turn over to that mark and continue there."

He opened at the mark and read:

"All love is not friendship; for if one loves, but is not beloved in turn, then there is love indeed on the one side, but not friendship between the two; for friendship is a sharing or communication of love. Therefore, where love is not mutual, there can be no friendship. Nor is it enough that it merely be mutual, but the parties must also know that their affection is mutual; for if they do not know this, they have love, but

not friendship. There must be some kind of communication between them; this is the ground of friendship. Now, according to the different kinds of communications, the friendship is also different. Thus, if the communication be of things false and vain, the friendship also is false and vain; if of things true, the friendship is also true; and the more laudable these good things are which are communicated, the more laudable also is the friendship.

“A friendship that is grounded on the communication of sensual pleasures is utterly gross and unworthy of the name of friendship; and so is that which is grounded on qualities that are frivolous and vain. The pleasures which I call sensual are those that are immediately and principally annexed to the exterior senses, such as the pleasure of beholding a beautiful person, hearing a sweet voice, and the like. The qualities which I call frivolous and vain are those which only weak minds call virtues and perfections. Hear how the greater part of silly maids, women and young people talk; they have on their tongues such things as these:—‘Oh, how many virtues and perfections that gentleman has; see how gracefully he dances, how well he plays all sorts of games; he

dresses fashionably, sings delightfully, talks so nicely, looks so fine!" Surely, this is the way mountebanks talk of one another.

"All these things belong to the senses; and so, the friendships which are grounded on them are sensual, vain, frivolous, and deserve to be called rather foolish fondness than real friendship. Yet these are the ordinary friendships of young people, grounded on curly locks, a fine head of hair, smiling looks, fine clothes, affected airs, and idle talk—friendship indeed suited to the age of those lovers whose virtue is only in the blossom, and whose judgment is only in the bud; and, indeed, such amities being but passing, melt away like snow in the sun.

"But love every one with an ardent love of charity; and, as to friendship, have none except with those who communicate with you the things of virtue; and the more exquisite these virtues are, the more perfect will your friendship be. If your communication be in the sciences, the friendship is certainly very praiseworthy; still more so, however, if it be in the moral virtues, in prudence, discretion, fortitude, justice. But should your communications be in charity, devotion, and Christian perfection, Oh, then, how precious

will not your friendship be! It will be precious and excellent, because it comes from God; excellent, because it goes to God; excellent, because its bond of union is God; excellent, because it shall last forever in the bosom of God. Oh, how good it is to love on earth as they love in heaven, to learn to cherish one another in this world as we shall do eternally in the next. *How good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.* (Ps. cxxxii. 1.) For the delicious balm of devotion distills out of one heart into another, by so continued a participation, that it may be said God has poured out upon this friendship *His blessing and life everlasting.*"

"Is not that sweet, Charles?" broke in the lady here. "Just read that one paragraph more." She pointed it out; he proceeded:

"Finally, the following divine sentences are two main pillars upon which repose a Christian life: the one is that of the wise man, '*He that feareth God shall likewise have a good friendship.*' The other is that of the Apostle St. James: '*The friendship of this world is the enemy of God.*'"

Thus did the members of that Christian family spend their time. But *where are our voyagers?*



XV.

THE LOST BOY.

LET us return awhile to our voyagers on the deep blue sea. We left them on the night that two strangers were heard speaking of Edward Desmond. The uncle of the latter, from that night forward, kept his eyes well fixed upon the pair; and Harry Markman, the sailor boy, dreamt ever and anon of his early days, when his heart was lighter and his soul purer. The ship drew near to New York and at last dropped anchor in the port.

Amid the bustle of landing, Mr. Desmond's baggage was one of the first examined, and next in order came the trunk of the sailor boy. The gentleman, after observing him for a moment, asked familiarly:

"Well, my young man, coming ashore?"

"Yes, sir," answered the sailor, respectfully.

"Going to stay ashore?"

"Yes, sir."

"What! tired of sea-life?"

"I am," and the young man's eyes fell on his trunk, which was being examined beside him.

"Which way do you go now?" asked Mr. Desmond, just on the point of going off with his luggage.

"West, sir, to C——."

"Do you?" asked the gentleman, stopping short and fixing his eyes upon him. The sailor boy was very pale and thin, his dress very poor, his trunk a rough box, and the things inside coarse and so few as only to cover the bottom. And there was a delicate, suffering air about the youth, as of one who had met with hard times and was walking hard ways without the natural strength or early breeding to bear him up under the trial. Mr. Desmond said: "I am going that way myself; if you need help or company, I can afford you both. Put your trunk along with mine and go with me."

No answer was given. The kind gentleman bade his porter take the boy's trunk, and laying his hand upon the poor youth's shoulder, said: "Come, my boy." Abashed,

but with a glance of gratitude, the sailor accompanied his benefactor.

This Mr. Desmond was the uncle of Edward and Charles by the father's side. He was engaged in extensive mercantile relations, and the seat of his business was at C——. To attend in his office was nominally the occupation of Edward, since this young man had returned from his European tour. But, ever since that famous tour, this young man had done little good, either in the office or out of it. Mr. Desmond's relations with Edward's mother were always of the most affectionate kind, and Charles was as dear to him as any of his own children. On the present occasion, as he walked behind his luggage, he little thought how deeply interested were the friends at home in the person who walked by his side; he did not know he had recovered the dearest pledge of a family's happiness and of two families' friendship. He stepped with his companion into a hackney-cab, and the baggage being secured, away they drove straight to the railway depot for the West. He started a conversation:

"Does your father live in C——?"

"My father is dead, sir." The speaker

paused, then resumed: "My mother"—and stopped.

"Have you a mother?"

To speak of one whom we have injured is to speak of our own crime; he answered with difficulty, "Yes, sir."

The gentleman observed his reluctance, and instinctively drew back from further questioning. He sat face to face with the young man, and directing the latter's attention by a motion of his finger, said of a large stone building which they were just passing:

"What a massive edifice! I have seen some buildings out West, too, that are very fine. Have you seen much of New York, my young man? By-the-way, how may I call you? What is your name?"

The boy answered: "Markman."

The effect was electric. The gentleman's curiosity had, in spite of his forbearance to push inquiries, been considerably excited by all the circumstances of Henry's person and conduct, and now the most complete and unexpected solution was flashed upon him by a word.

"Markman!" he exclaimed with vehemence, "Henry Markman! Are you the

long lost son?" and in the fervor of his excitement he seized the youth's hands in both of his and gazed at his features like one beside himself.

The boy was no less excited: "Who are you, sir?"

"Uncle Desmond."

Harry remembered him, and his features fell. The red spots of hectic flush disappeared upon his pale cheeks in a deep blush of shame; and the sunken chest heaved with emotion as Uncle Desmond said, with deep feeling:

"Harry, Harry, where have you been, away from your poor mother?"

"Take pity on me, sir!"

"I do, dear Henry. Where have you been so long away from your forlorn mother?"

"Oh, mother!" exclaimed the youth with anguish, and broke into a fit of violent sobbing, and buried his face in his hands—"Oh, mother!" was all he could sob out; nor did he know yet that the same mother had twice been brought to the brink of the grave, and the doctor had pronounced mental suffering as the chief cause of her prostration—grief for the loss of her son.

The uncle sank back in his place and let

the penitent indulge his tears. After a while, Harry recovered himself:

"I have been on the sea."

"Ever since you left home?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, recover yourself, my boy. We shall take some refreshments when we arrive at the depot. Courage, my son," and the kind gentleman held the boy's hand in his own.

The hack rattled into the railway station. Mr. Desmond gave orders at the restaurant for a full dinner; for all he knew, Harry's emaciated appearance might be owing to want of sustenance. They sat down together; but the hectic flush, and the pale cheek, and the hollow-sounding cough did not come from want of food; rather, they accounted for a total want of appetite; and the two rose from the table, having scarcely tasted of the plentiful viands set before them. Then they walked up and down the platform, or rested on a bench, till the train should start. Harry told his story—a sad story indeed, which began with running away from a fond mother and ended, as it should, with a repentance, heartfelt but dearly bought, at the cost of a life marred and a constitution

ruined. The story was followed by a pause, which each filled up with his own reflections, until the words of some persons approaching them from behind diverted their attention :

"So we'll just wait till we get there; we'll first fix the business with him, and then off on our own business."

"Hallo!" broke in the other party, taking a lower tone, "here is our old passenger ahead of us. You remember the tumble he had, down to the ship's side." There was a light chuckle; then passing our two friends, they did not seem to notice either, both of whom, however, recognized the couple, the thick set gentleman and the taller one, who had Edward Desmond's name in their mouth.

"Who are those?" Harry asked eagerly of Mr. Desmond.

"I don't know, son; but I should very much like to know; I heard them say something aboard ship which has made me anxious."

"I," returned Harry with simplicity, "heard them speak of your nephew Edward."

"And so did I," replied the uncle with surprise: "it was on a wintry night about a week ago."

"That's the time," responded Harry, "I

was standing close by. Who can they be?"

"They are bound to go in the same train with us," said the uncle.

At last the train started. The two pairs of travellers were lodged in the same car. The rest of that day and the next night passed. Early on the following morning, all had risen from their couches, and the train, with a hiss and a bellow, rushed into a winding valley between two ranges of hills and a beautiful river down the centre. The thundering cars sped along the winding banks, and the thick smoke, like a dense plume, waved behind them on their path, and the scene was beautiful in the fresh morning air, with the first touch of spring green beginning to adorn the hills. One of the two strangers inquired of some one where they were. Mr. Desmond, on hearing the voice now painfully familiar to him, broke into the topic of which his mind was full—Edward and these strangers.

"Did you ever hear, son," he said to Harry, "of Free-masons following their prey into cities and countries, to the family hearth or even to the altar of God, across oceans and seas, over hill and dale, into the desert?"

"No sir," replied Harry.

"They have that reputation," rejoined the uncle, "and Mazzini forbids the Tabernacle of God or the mother's bosom to be respected by his followers. Did you ever fall in with them, Harry?"

"No sir."

"Did you stay long on land anywhere?"

"No sir."

"Thank God for one evil avoided, my boy. I have heard it related by a person who witnessed this with his own eyes, that in the hands of Free-masons a boy of sixteen can be so corrupted as to be no longer recognizable. In three months the devil is looking through his features; the bloom of youth is gone—not to mention the exquisite beauty of purity and virtue—and the lines which vice has traced in his face have made it as haggard as that of an old wretch. This was given me as a fact by one who, as a Catholic professor, knew the boy in a Catholic College, and in three months afterwards scarcely or completely failed to recognize him."

The gentleman then pulled out of his pocket a newspaper, saying: "Hear what a German Masonic paper has just said: 'The Catholic Church is supremely hostile not

only to Free-masonry, but to all associations whose aim is to spread enlightenment and civilization. If, therefore, we desire to be true Free-masons, and to further the cause to the advancement of which we have pledged ourselves, we must without reserve or hesitation adopt as our own the words of Strauss, and proclaim aloud: We are no longer Christians, we are simply Free-masons; nothing less and nothing more.' "





XVI.

THE RETURN.

AT last the train arrived at the terminus. Just one thing had transpired to give the uncle information; it was to the effect that the couple of suspicious-looking travellers had prospects of settling down in business somewhere or other in the States. This item of information he carefully pocketed; for an American, who knew the signs and ways of the times and country, little would be needed to meet and baffle any knavery they might contemplate.

Harry was no longer attired in his rough sailor clothes, but as became his station. He now stood on the ground whence he had set forth, some half-dozen years before, for his wearisome wanderings; then light and flighty, now sober; then with hope and the good things of life before him, now with memory turned backward on all those goods of life either lost or injured, and life itself on

the wane. His native air did not seem fresh to him; his native city had no sympathies for him, and his heart sank with loneliness—but he remembered his mother, and then it overflowed with bitterness and self-reproach.

The uncle drove straight to Mrs. Desmond's. Great was the joy at his arrival, but greater the surprise and joy over Harry, the treasure-trove. Thought of everything else was lost in the questionings and congratulations at Harry's reappearance. The poor youth himself sat apart, abashed. But Charles came into the scene, and he, with all the instinct and affability of true charity, took his place beside Harry, and with the warmest marks of affection, told him all the things that had happened, whatever might tend to interest him; he did not ask Harry any questions. The latter felt Charles' sympathy. Meanwhile, after deliberation, Mr. Desmond, the uncle, took his way to his own home, while Mrs. Desmond and Emily bade a temporary adieu to Harry Markman and drove to the house of his mother.

Charles was lively in all the things he had to say. Harry observed:

"You seem to know all about me."

"To be sure," answered the other; "your

mother has been here constantly during these many years, ever since the day"—he broke off and thought for a moment, then resumed confidentially and with tender affection, "ever since the day my mother made me promise to do whatever I could for you."

"Did you promise?"

"Oh, yes; only I have not had a chance yet of fulfilling it."

"Charles, I am afraid no other chance is left."

"Why so, Harry? I have had none at all yet."

"Charles, did you pray for me?"

"Regularly I have addressed your Guardian Angel."

"Then you have done more than fulfil your promise, if I am here now owing to your prayers. Charles, my dear Charles," he clasped his friend's hand, "I do not see much chance left; and as if to show the truth of what he said, a deep, hollow cough came from his lungs. Charles' spirit sank as he heard it. He returned the grasp of the hand that held his:

"I shall do something yet, please God!"

"Thank you, Charles, thank you;" and the cough was repeated from the depths.

"Henry, have you been happy?"

"Oh, don't mention the word!"

"Do you want to see your mother?"

"Very much—to let her see me. It won't last long!"

"Don't speak so, Henry," exclaimed Charles in distress.

"I cannot help it. You may do something for me yet, Charles; don't leave me when I want you beside me. Stay with me, dear Charles. It won't last long."

There was a deep silence.

A carriage drove up. The boys were called out; no greeting waited them from the two ladies who returned for them; nothing but sadness seemed to have been the fruit of the news taken to Mrs. Markman. In fact, she was a lady of strong nerve; but her nerves had all been strung now in the way of sacrifice to that Sacred Heart, which she had long adored in spirit and in truth. Long ago had her hope been surmounted by her generosity; long ago had she offered, out of the graces with which God had strengthened her, this one effort of her strength, to ask no more for her long-lost son, but to rest alone in the will of God. "May the adorable will of God be adored in all things!"

Now the whole tide of maternal affection, long since turned in another direction, is opened again on the son returned; and for a while all the agony of her many years' woe, pent up and well nigh forgotten, is opened again on her soul. The grief of years comes pouring again upon her through the flood-gates of memory, which her son's return, like the key of her grief, unlocks once more. And the two ladies, who visited her and broke the news, could almost wish that the key had never been found to start such floods of grief.

"Where have you been, my son?" she murmured when he came and threw himself into her arms.

The rest took seats apart and conversed awhile; then judging that Mrs. Markman was calm enough to be left alone with her son, they rose to depart.

"Will Mr. Desmond come?" she asked them.

"Not this evening," replied Charles' mother, as she held the lady by the hand.

"Do get him to come as soon as possible; I want to thank him from the fulness of my heart. And you too, my dearest friend, I shall never thank you enough for all your

affection. "Charlie, dear Charlie," and she almost embraced the boy, "I do not know whether your task is done; Henry may need your help yet." She looked at her son, her eyes swimming with tears; he had nothing to say, but his appearance spoke.

"I shall come, if you please," said Charlie, "at all hours, and uninvited." The Desmonds departed, leaving the mother with the prodigal child.

He was penitent, she forgiving; so much so that she seemed to have forgotten everything save that he was with her once more, and was helpless. What passed between them 'tis hard to say, but pleasant to think; for there is one thing which such sweetness of motherly love reminds us of, and that is the love of God for us. From the mother's heart Christ expressly asks us to form an idea of His own.

A day passed; there were several visits to the house. The mother and son were always together; and when Charles called in and went on his way, he found them and he left them together. Indeed, weak and laboring at every little bodily effort, Harry seemed to live on the sight of his mother; certainly, he did not seem to live on food, so little of

it did he touch. The doctor shook his head; and the more his case looked desperate, the more he seemed to cling to his forgiving parent, as a wounded fledgling to its nest.

During three days Charles called no more. They were the first three days in Holy Week, and he was making, with the other boys, a retreat as holy as the time. Success therein is built on conditions; one of them is to live alone; and this, for a Christian, is to live with God. Even boys can, in their own measure, fulfil this first condition of interior life; and even boys can, under the uncommon inspirations of the hour, and in the overflowing unction of the Holy Spirit, feel the reality of God's presence, and hear the words which he utters when their hearts beat together; so Charles was no exception when he felt an unwonted variety of feelings and affections, like notes elicited from his heart's chords by the Divine Master of souls. Besides, there was in the very season of the year an influence spread abroad and a power set in motion, that levelled the hills of external life and filled up the hollows within.

It was the morning of Holy Thursday. The boys had just received their Easter Communion. Mass was over; the choir

was hushed; all were kneeling in thanksgiving. Then came stealing around through the open windows, and through the chapel door that stood ajar, a melody and a harmony from the church beyond; the organ swelled, and a voice, divinely sweet in the distance, sang a hymn of love. It went through the soul of Charles; the first thought that came from his heart was that which he had heard in the Mass: "On the lyre I will confess to Thee, O God, my God! why art thou sad, O my soul, and why dost thou trouble me?"

A strange question of that choice young soul! yet, after all, not strange for what acquaintance we have made with him. We saw him first at a time when his exterior conduct clearly betrayed some trouble; and afterwards we learnt that he was wanting in habitual composure, that his conversation lacked the steadiness and coherency which peace of mind begets and preserves. His friend James did not understand him on occasions; there was a fidgetiness in his manner and a curtness in his replies which did not accord well with his usual demeanor. His mother had noticed a cloud upon his brow. And over and above all this, we hear

him asking: "Why art thou sad, O my soul, and why dost thou trouble me?"

The sacred time in which we find him now is one of peculiar virtue; and the last day of this Holy Week enjoys the special privilege of lighting a new fire at the portals of the Church. A new fire is needed to purify flesh and blood. He needs a touch of the flame which the Sacred Heart of Jesus came down from heaven to kindle, and which hardens this human clay to the impressions of earth; so that if it exult at all or move with life, it may be only at the touch, not of things like itself, but of the living God. The new fire will be lighted on Holy Saturday.





XVII.

THE MYSTERIOUS CARD.

IT was the evening of Good Friday. The family of the Desmonds returned from church, where the devotion of the Stations had been publicly performed, Charles acting with many others as server, in cassock and surplice. They sat down and were conversing, when Edward and Galveston came in. The usual courtesies being interchanged, all chatted freely together; when the old dame, Mary, entered the room, and, handing a card to Edward, stated that two gentlemen had called for him, but, not finding him in, had left that card with directions. Mrs. Desmond looked at Edward inquiringly, but his eyes did not meet hers; she asked:

“When did they come?”

“Just after you had gone to the Stations, ma'am; and I was on the point of following. It is only now I return.” The old dame was

like a member of the family, and as she stood in the midst, and nobody said anything, she resumed agreeably:

"I saw Master Charles serving with all those other fine young lads, as they went around the church. Sure, they are a fine set; they look about thirty in number—all sizes—a long family. I'd go miles to see 'em."

"Ah! Ah! Mary," exclaimed Emily, raising her finger, "so you go to church to see the sights and look at Charlie! How does he sing?"

They laughed; the old dame replied with earnestness, and not without a touch of fun:

"Indeed, miss, begging your pardon, I do no such thing. I'm sure Charlie sings well; I never heard him. But I don't go to see the sights, miss. I don't see everything there, I assure you." She looked vaguely around. "I did not see master Edward there."

A most unfortunate hit! Edward had not gone to church at all—not he! His face assumed a look of extreme mortification, because of his mother's presence and the eye which he felt for one moment searching him. Charles observed his mother, and

Emily was inclined to laugh; while Galveston smoothed his mustache.

"Indeed, Miss Emily, I do not go to church to look about me; but when thirty or forty fine young lads in cassock and surplice come about me, why then my thoughts flock about them, and I pray all the better for having seen them, and particularly"—her eyes and tongue rest together on Charles; he colors a little. She is talkative. Emily keeps her going:

"And particularly what?"

"Well," resumed the matron, not minding the query, "some folks may go, if they like, to see the sights in church, just as on Friday morning they might go to eat hot cross-buns, not for the sake of the cross, but for the sake of the buns; so their church-going is not for the church's sake, nor for the cross' sake, but for the going itself and the seeing and the being seen."

Edward muttered: "The old cross hag!" He could have eaten her up, not particular whether for the cross' sake or the hag's sake! "See, Mary," he broke in with some asperity, "tell us what is free-will?" There was a smile all around.

"Master Edward, there are many that do

things out of their own free-will and then say they cannot help it. Why? Because the hook of their bad habit holds 'em fast. They cannot get away; they are sorely bitten; they cannot help it. But who was the first biter, they or the hook?"

"What of that?"

"Why, people won't believe 'em, when they complain of their hook; people say, *Serve 'em right*. And the others, not liking to be served right so, say it doesn't serve 'em right, for they couldn't help it, they were not free, they had no free-will at all, at all;" she met Mrs. Desmond's eye and began to retire; "but, ma'am, it is my poor opinion, if they would just drop talking of free-will and take to using it, then, by hook or by crook, they'd get clear of the most crooked hook that ever yet caught 'em. Where there's a will, there's a way."

"Good night, Mary."

"Good night, ma'am." and she vanished.

The talk was renewed; after a while Galveston rose to depart; Edward offered to accompany him; and the two left the house behind them. Edward had spoken little in the company at home; not because it was Good Friday, and compunction of heart shut

his lips to men, opening them to God—he had long ago forgotten his morning and evening prayers! But something else was near his heart; shadows deep and depressing were there, relics of bygone excesses, a gloom that was thrown over him, not by the spirit of remorse, but by a fear that unmanned him. His mother's saving lessons, instilled in his earlier years, had turned into gall and bitterness, without any efficacy to withdraw him from the wrong path. He needed now a stronger potion to set his head and heart aright.

"What is that card you got?" asked Galveston.

"M——'s hotel is written on it, and signed with initials I don't know," Edward answered moodily.

"I presume," said Galveston, "that we are just on our way there now, if you mean to finish off the evening as we did a few nights ago."

"Aye, a few nights ago!" repeated the other bitterly; "and what was I saying a few nights ago about Paris? Was there truth in it?"

"We may see perhaps now" answered his companion.

They entered their usual place of resort, the coffee-room of the hotel mentioned. Scarcely were they within than their eyes were riveted on two men who sat at a table somewhat far from the door, but so placed as to command a view of the whole room, and particularly of the entrance. One of these, a small, thick-set man, observed our couple entering, and called off his neighbor's attention from the newspaper to them. Edward muttered: "I never saw them before;" he sat down with Galveston at a table and gave his orders. When these were attended to, one of the couple opposite rose, came to our friends, and politely asked Edward if a card had been delivered.

"Yes, sir," said Edward; "are you the gentleman."

"I am, sir; would you favor me with a few moments' talk at our table?" and in a manner that showed plainly enough Galveston was not wanted, he conducted Edward most politely to the table beyond. They conversed; and Galveston the while had, we may imagine, three eyes in his head.

Five minutes elapsed, during which business was evidently being done, if Edward's flurried manner and the other's earnest ges-

tures betokened anything; and at last, with a sudden impetus, the young man rose and returned to Galveston. The couple beyond looked after him; but Edward took his seat with his back to them; flushed in face and incoherent in the first few words he said. At last something intelligible came from his mutterings:

"The men who called for me at home, want my help in getting a place."

"Nothing else?"

Yes, from Europe,—stay here,—keeping up relations with Europe."

"Well?"

"Well, hang it! They are Free-masons."

"They can do nothing here," said Galveston.

Edward broke out in reply: "That dark man"—an oath—"why didn't you keep me out of their clutches?" He looked fiercely at Galveston; the latter was calm. Edward drank, threw himself back in his chair, thrust his hands into his pockets and muttered again: "I'll be consistent, I'll be my own master, and one trade is as good as another, what's the odds? I am my own master! or if I'm not, I'm not to be blamed; and, if I am, who'll blame me?" Misfortune was making

him imbecile. He drank. "This is a thorn in my side, Galveston! bell, book and candle-light won't help it! Galveston, you said you were half-a-catholic! Drop the half and be a strong mind." He drank. "Humph! what's all this about? Good night."

He rose and went home and tumbled into bed, as the ox in its stall or the ass in its stable, without blessing on his lips, without blessing on his head!





XVIII.

DARKNESS AND LIGHT.

AFTER Galveston, with Edward, had taken leave of the family, Emily retired and Charles was left alone with his mother.

The boy's air had of late been the absorbing object of her attention. Her conversation with him, two weeks before, had shown how her thoughts were bent on him; and her eyes had followed her thoughts ever since, till she became convinced of what was really the case, that some worm was gnawing at his peace of heart within. Charles now sat beside her; and she, leaning over the arm of her chair, laid her hand on that of Charles, who raised his eyes inquiringly, waiting for her word. After a moment's mild gaze at his frank and open countenance, the expression of which she loved so well, she said:

"My son, tell me, what is it that troubles you?"

Charles understood her perfectly. He was

silent. His mother still bent her sweet look of inquiry on him. He cast down his eyes.

"Charles," she resumed more earnestly, "will you not tell me? Has anything hurt you? Or am I less dear to you?"

"Oh no, mamma!"

"Then why do you not speak out?" She paused; no reply. "I do not know what to make of you." Not a word from him; her failure made her heart sink as with a weight of lead. She had never expected—never before met with the like from him. She spoke again, and energy nerved her voice to a new tone, masculine, deep:

"Charles, why do you not answer your mother? Have you lost interest in recognizing her? Or do you want her to lose interest in you?"

Her last words conveyed a rebuke such as the boy had never received in his life before. His hand was still under hers, and she felt his fingers twitch with nervousness. He raised his eyelid as if to look at her, but it fell; his lips moved as if to speak, but it was the symptom of a violent emotion—the poor boy buried his face in his hands and burst into tears.

The mother was amazed. Her first im-

pulse was that of weeping with him—but a sterner feeling checked the starting tears. She had asked him was he hurt; he answered her with tears and sobs. A dark suspicion crossed her mind—gloomy, horrifying,—it took possession of her in all its naked horrors—*had he sinned?*

Ah! take the finest porphyry vase and dash it to the earth; you have the faintest picture of a soul's innocence shattered and lost by sin. Lose the idol of your life, and weep your eyes out with the bitter salt tears; you may have the intensity, but naught of that high character of grief which a Christian mother feels over her son gone astray—the pure, living soul of the mother over the lost one of her son. Never more shall he be as he was. Let the saving waters of penance wash him white in the Blood of the Lamb; his first innocence is gone forever. Let him be picked out as a precious vase for the altar, here first, and then for heaven hereafter; never shall he be what he was. Brilliant he will be, and magnificent, but his *first* innocence will never return.

“My son!” uttered the mother, in accents of deepest distress, “my son, what is the matter?” She laid her hand upon his to

move it from his face and look at him; there was no need; for the warm tears were gushing through his fingers, and her hand was wet with them.

He could not command his voice, but at last he sobbed out: "I shall tell you to-morrow."

"You will tell me! Then do so, I entreat you. To-morrow—if to-morrow, why not"—she checked the rest and finished only mentally, "why not now?" "Then to-morrow," she resumed aloud; "go to rest now, Charles." And she kissed his fervid brow.

He rose more collected, but very down-cast, and left the room. No sooner was he in his own apartment and on his knees, than the tears flowed again. Then he rested on his pillow.

Suddenly a light shone through his window, and cast the shadow of its frame clear and distinct upon the ceiling; it moved. His first impulse was to start up and see what light it was that could appear in such a quiet part of the city, so suddenly and so brightly; it vanished. He fell back from his rising attitude and wondered. So it is; in darkness a light comes, and it goes, but whence it comes, and whither it goes, we know not. And so, in temptation, grace

comes, and warmth and brightness suddenly cheer us; but when they will come or whence they have come, we know not till afterwards,—till in heaven, we shall learn, and find it part of our blessedness to behold how everything, even the keenest blast of temptation, blew only for our good, and was tempered to our weakness. But now darkness is here, and the light comes and it goes, and it does its work, and we don't know how; but so it is.

And Charles mused and wondered whence came that light; and he thought that every light came first of all from his Father in heaven. He had tossed about for a whole hour, and the tears were not dry on his cheek or his pillow; so he felt tossed on the breakers of life: yet these same breakers were like a cradle to him, for he was under the eye of One who saw and loved, though Himself unseen. And Charles looked wonderingly about the dark corners of the room, to meet that eye and say: "Thou dost mark the fall of a sparrow; am not I much more?" But the eye escaped him; he could not catch it. Yet he felt it upon him, and saw it in the light of faith with the eye of his soul, and his bodily eyes closed with fatigue, and he slept.



XIX

THE CLOUDS ARE SCATTERED.

“**N**OW are you, little friend?” asked Charles, as he shook a little fellow’s hand next morning, under the college walls.

“As merry as a lark, Charlie,” was the blithe rejoinder; and the sun shone bright in the sky and was reflected in the boy’s face. It shone through the great east window of the church, and streamed over nave, sanctuary and altar. The faithful, scattered over the body of the church, told their silent prayers, while the intoning of the deacon waked the echoes at that early hour, and lent a voice to the stillness. The first fire was lighted, and the altar was vested anew; and the hearts of the faithful were warmed again with the Paschal joys of Holy Saturday.

The feeble Harry attended the one high Mass, and returned home full of spirits, chat-

ting with his mother about the pleasures of such a life as Charlie led.

"Mother," he said, "I should like to resemble Charlie. But he is younger—his time not wasted."

"What is it that delights you, Harry?"

"His life, so full and so beautiful. He has so many thoughts in his mind, when I talk to him, such as I could never think of; and his manners do so enchant me. And he does not think much of himself."

"That is true. It is the splendor of virtue to be unconscious of its presence."

"When we entered the church an hour ago, and saw him passing down the aisle in cassock and surplice, I should not care for a finer sight."

He talked on, and his mother was glad to see him talk himself out on such an inspiring topic.

"Mother," he turned rapidly to her, "have you forgiven me yet?"

"Henry," she looked at him with imploring eyes, "you know I do not wish you to entertain thoughts of that kind, if you love me. But, as to Charlie, wait till we see him in procession—see them all."

Meanwhile, Charlie had taken his way home.

He, too, said a word to his mother, and, as she made him take a seat beside her, she kissed him on the brow, and she unfolded unto him the story of her love and her fears, of her hopes and her anxiety. And he listened and his heart throbbed, as he viewed each opening of a mother's heart, and desired to give a true issue to such longings.

"I should like, indeed, mother," he said, "to be everything you would have me. But when of late I seemed to be growing otherwise—I was doing so unwillingly. When the mind experiences emotions and gathers around some object outside of me, no wonder I feel no longer myself."

"Son, we should always keep our thoughts within fold, in lawful pasture."

"I would, mother; and, therefore, I see my will is good."

"The will makes a way for itself."

"Yes, mother; but at the expense of other powers, which do not yield easily."

"That is true, child—eyes and ears. But the expense they are put to is not worth counting."

"It is a pity they cost so much trouble. If one could not see, ten thousand imaginings would never be—persons, forms, looks—

which the heart should never go after. If one could not hear, so many sweet sounds would never play upon the soul and keep up their echoes long after the voice has uttered them."

"These things may not be in our power, Charlie; but diversion is."

"Until it is tiresome and tedious to be always diverting oneself; when diversion is no pleasure, but a sickening repetition—in the moments of stillness, in the hour of dusk, in the noonday rest, and under the lights of the altar."

"It is a gentle martyrdom, Charlie."

"For those who bear it, mother; but for those who do not, it is surely destruction; and for those who bear up feebly, it is a sore racking and distraction of themselves. Therefore it is, I have not been myself at all, for some time back, mother." And he clasped her hand in his.

"God bless you, my son!"

"But I will become myself again, mother, I promise you. No half measures are worthy of a Christian; the whole or none."

"You speak excellently, child. I would I could have instilled such principles into you as you have already imbibed somewhere."

"They are plain to me, mother—whether it is that lights around me are brighter, or my eyes are opened wider."

"Charles, I would not approach the sacred converse of your soul with God, otherwise than as a matter of great deliberation. That is sacred ground. But, my dear Charles, you seem to have carried me on to the sacred ground of your intercourse with God, and I learn that you are not broken—you are my precious vase—and you are not broken! You carry the perfumes of my existence, for time and eternity; and the perfumes are not lost. God bless you, child!"

Charles melted into tears. The clouds which had hung over his soul were scattered. Doubts about the present state of his soul seemed to have preyed upon him and now to have been scattered. Doubts, too, about his future seemed to have darkened his day. But the future is best revealed when the future comes. And the present, with its beclouding atmosphere, which seemed to hold suspended germs of disease, was purified by the breathing of a gentle wind. There is One in whose hands are the winds and the waves—One in whose power is the breath of purity; and such appeared from

Charles' words to be the saving breath which had restored to him his serenity.

It was in the course of this same day that Edward called on his uncle, Mr. Desmond, and said:

"I should like a little information, sir, if I am not troublesome."

"Not at all," was the answer; "take a chair. Nothing pleases me better than the opportunity of a chat with you, Edward."

"Uncle," said the young man demurely, "I must confess that I have not drawn upon your advice and counsel to any great extent. But if I did not take you more into my confidence for the sake of your kind direction, it was not that I made little of your direction, but that I thought my confidence worth not over much."

"Don't mention it, Edward; if I can be of any service to you, state it."

"I shall need your patient hearing, uncle. When I was in Europe, some things occurred which now threaten trouble. For your interest in me, on my mother's account—"

"And on your own, believe me, Edward."

"Thank you, uncle, for your kindness; well, on my own account also, I beg your advice in the present circumstances."

"What are they?"

The young man here detailed openly and plainly the circumstances of his last night's interview with the two arrivals from Europe, along with all the antecedents of such an interview. The uncle contracted his brows once or twice during the recital, but said, quite cheerily, at the close:

"I believe, my dear Edward, that I understand the whole case: leave the rest to me, with confidence. Be assured that my plans will succeed."

"Thank you, uncle; I shall be eternally indebted to you."

"I think, Edward, you might put me under more obligations to yourself."

"How so?"

"By suffering my office and its duties to produce more effect upon you and to take up more of your time, than they do."

Edward was silent. It was palpable that the amount of time and attention he bestowed on his uncle's affairs was below par.

"You would put me under more obligations to you, Edward."

"Well, uncle, I rather think that the indebtedness would be wholly on my own side."

"It may be; the more you had to do and did, the less would idleness, the root of all evils, spread its growth in the soul. It is the same evil which agitates the schoolboy at his desk, and cracks the even surface of his soul; it starts unholy connections, with consequences more unholy. If you would use the chances my office affords, we might be more indebted to one another."

A trivial thought shot through the young man's mind, that he would, at the same time, be less indebted for finery, frivolity, and questionable amusements.

"Your early chances," the uncle continued, "and your younger promise would not have the lie given to them; your life would be more useful, not only to yourself, but also to others. What kind of a living death is that life which expends its best energies of body and mind in dealing and receiving strokes of death—of moral death, of ruined prospects, of an existence without a purpose or an aim!"

"It is true, sir. But I am waxing old;—the idea of starting anew!"

"I myself, Edward, am not too old to begin again, wherever I fail. I do not say, undo what is already done. Consequences, once

started into being, will assert themselves; the stone that is thrown knows not how to return. But I say, take a new aim at a new object. Shun a repetition of the past; repair it by more than will counterbalance it in the future."

"I will attend your office, sir."

"Not only my office, Edward, but my advice. I am ahead of you in life, and I can look from above on the ruggednesses of your young existence; and I say, nothing is so bad but it may be made good. Still, nothing bad can be made so good as not to leave its mark in eternity."





XX.

ST. MONICA.

EVENTS were coming to a crisis. It was the fourth of May. The day was faithless to the month which bore it, for the air was chilly and cheerless. Henry Markman was in his room, reclining in a great chair, and his appearance betokened exhaustion. There was a pallor in his countenance, and there was a flush too; which latter came no more from the fire burning on the hearth, than did the paleness from the chill outside. His mother sat beside him. To attend on him, one way or other, seemed to be her sole occupation; and it seemed, too, as if that sole occupation would soon be gone.

The bell of the outer door rang, and soon the well-known tread of Charles Desmond was heard approaching the room. Harry brightened with pleasure as his friend entered; and, with his mother on his left and Charlie on his right, he felt in good company.

"The doctor has prescribed these stimulants," said the mother to Charles.

"I wish," answered the latter, "there were no need of other stimulants than our two selves; you and I, madam, ought to have spirits enough in us for any dozen of these outstretched skeletons," and he took Harry's thin hand in his own and chafed it.

"I never got such a draught of spirits in my life," replied the invalid, "as when I saw you at the altar."

"But, still more, when you felt your mother by your side."

"No, Charlie," he said sadly, "my mother takes all the spirit out of me."

"What are you saying, dearest Henry!" exclaimed the lady, and the tear stood in her eye.

"I mean, mother, that I never see you without thinking of my—my—"

"Do not, I beg of you, son, refer to that. Don't weep; you will make me quite unhappy."

"I cannot help it, mother; I should never have done it."

"Henry," said Charles, "do you know what Saint the Church honors to-day?"

"Whom?"

"St. Monica, the mother of St. Augustine."

"Tell me something of them, Charlie."

"I remember reading that they stood together before a window, one evening at Ostia; they were staying there the while, on the point of passing over from Rome to Africa. It was after St. Augustine's conversion."

"Back to his mother's side, Charlie, if I mistake not?"

"She had followed him, dearest Henry, from Africa to Milan, where he taught rhetoric; it was to her prayers and tears that he ever attributed his coming back to God."

Henry turned his head around, put out his hand, and taking that of his mother, kissed it thrice.

"What did they do at Ostia?"

"They stood before the window together, and looked over the garden in front, out to the harbor of the Tiber. They talked together, forgetful of the past, stretching forward to the future prospect of life among the Saints."

"Yes!" ejaculated the invalid, forgetting the present in the vision opening before him.

"The best of what they saw and heard, as they exercised their minds and hearts in this

holy conversation, is too high for me to repeat."

"How elevating!" exclaimed Mrs. Markman. "Reflections of this kind lighten so much the cares of life!"

"Already, in a manner, their cares had ceased to be, at the time they thus conversed, for Monica told her son that now there was nothing further for her in this life; there was no further pleasure and no further hope. The only hope to be accomplished was already fulfilled; Augustine was a Christian. Indeed, he was a Saint."

"Monica, too, was a Saint."

"Yes," replied Charles; "but she had not always been so."

"Indeed! What was her early life?"

"She was once called by a servant a wine-bibber."

"St. Monica was? Did the servant mean it?"

"Yes," answered Charles, "and it was the salvation of the girl; for she never deserved the appellation again."

"Tell us how it all happened."

"The way was interesting and instructive enough. Monica had always been put upon her guard against such a degrading vice as

wine-bibbing; she had for nurse an old woman who had carried Monica's father in her arms; and this good old woman was so strict that she would not suffer any of the girls to drink between meals at all, and at meals it was only water she allowed them."

"Oh, that was too hard!" exclaimed Harry.

"Well, she said to them that soon they would become mistresses in houses of their own, and would have the keys of closets and cellars. If now, when young, they could not control their appetites so as to grant them only what was necessary, they would readily then pass over to indulging in what was luxurious."

"Well, but how," inquired Harry, "after such self-subjugation, could Monica do what you said?"

"You see, Harry, she became a self-denying, prudent girl, and therefore her parents gave to her, as the most trustworthy, the key of the cellar to draw wine. She took the cup, and dipping it into the cask from above, drew it out; but before pouring the wine, thus drawn, into her pitcher, she had the slight imprudence to put it to her lips and take one little sip. She did not like it, and took no more that time."

"Why, on earth, did she take it at all, if she did not like it?"

"Others did, you see. I myself have been tempted to take up some habits of my elders, not because I like them, but because my elders do. No doubt, I should come to be fond of them in course of time."

"It is remarkable," observed Mrs. Markman; "and it is just the way children do; they must try everything with their own mouths. The nurses have to see that they don't poison or cut themselves. And when they grow older, they are bound by some mania to put their mouths to every pump they see."

"Mother, I should not like children to have a hydrophobia."

"Nor I, Harry; but that is no reason why they should drink so; and, goodness! how they eat—fish, flesh, fowl, fruit, anything that is eatable."

"Yes," resumed Charles; "it would seem from Monica's case that their teeth water, even though they don't know the taste of a thing. She did not know the taste of the wine; yet she obeyed the childish law of childhood. On the second and third days, a drop or two became less and less unpalata-

ble. She thought it all nothing, until the nothing became something great, when she could quaff off a whole cup without wincing."

"Where now was her old nurse?"

"Yes, where was she? And where would have been Monica's future sanctity, but for a stroke of Providence?"

"What was that?"

"One day she fell into a quarrel with the maid-servant who used to go down with her into the cellar, and the servant called her a wine-bibber."

"That was a stroke!"

"It cut her to the quick, and she never drank again. And her future turned out to be such as had been promised by her early training. She was given in marriage—strangely enough—to a pagan; but she strove to win him to God, speaking and winning, not so much by words as by deeds, painting God to him in her manners. But her ways were many, and I am doing all the talking. What does Harry think of himself?" He smiled as he addressed Mrs. Markman.

"He will surely think himself better, if you let him hear more of these ways and manners of the Saints."

"I am delighted," Charles answered, "to

see him interested in anything. Do you feel any pain, Harry?"

"No; but this short breathing is troublesome."

"I confess, Mrs. Markman," said Charles, "that I always feel more of a man after chatting with my friends. I cannot help thinking of those lines which a poet addresses to God:

*When with dear friends sweet talk I hold,
And all the flowers of life unfold,
Let not my heart within me burn,
Except in all I Thee discern.*

What do you think, madam?"

"My dear Charles," said the lady, affectionately, "I assure you that you cannot do me a greater favor, than by entertaining Henry frequently with your favorite thoughts. I am of one mind with you as to the effect of them. And Henry thinks the same."

"Indeed he does," said the invalid, for himself.

"Then *au revoir*—till I make bold to come again," said Charlie, as he rose.

"Good morning, Charles," said Henry.

"God bless you, child!" said the lady to him, as he bade her adieu,



XXI.

CORPUS CHRISTI DAY.

THE month of June is come, the last in which we shall see our friend, Harry Markman; and this was the day of all days for flowers, splendor and joy; it was the feast of Corpus Christi. Harry was anxious to enjoy what, since his return home, had become his only real pleasure—to be present at church service; and also, as he said himself, to take a view of Charlie.

After high mass the solemn procession was formed; and forty little boys in black, and little girls in white, began to proceed down the nave, strewing rose-leaves and flowers the while; and there issued forth from the sanctuary a cross-bearer, escorted on either side by an acolyte with lighted candle. A couple of small servers followed, vested in scarlet cassock and muslin surplice; their necks were adorned with a chain and

pendant medallion, containing the likeness of their patron saint, Blessed John Berchmans. While they rang bells of joy, three more followed, holding the staff and tassels of a banner, which carried the portraiture of the same blessed patron. Two more advanced bearing lighted torches, and escorting an acolyte, in whose hands rested a symbol of the Blessed Sacrament—ears of wheat upon a golden salver; a couple more of torches proceeded, escorting such another symbol-bearer, with rich grapes clustering upon a silver platter; and a dozen other such couples followed, doing honor to as many signs of Corpus Christi—chalice and paten and cruets, in gold; veil, burse, pall, in silk and satin. And the attire, meanwhile, of the torch-bearers and symbol-bearers alternated between white and black and white and scarlet. Others came with a banner of the Sacred Heart, and tassel-bearers, in size diminutive, but exquisite attire.

The clergy proceeded forward, numbering over a score, vested in dalmatic, cope, and chasuble, of damask, silver and gold; and, as they advanced, they chanted the *Pange Lingua* of congratulation, love, and triumph for the Sacrament of the Body of Christ.

Three more acolytes bore incense; six swung censers; two followed with lighted candles, immediately in the face and presence of Him, to whom every tribute of devotion was being paid, in whose honor the tongues of all sang joy, souls were raised in prayer, and gloved hands carried flowers, torches, symbols and banners. He came, borne in a remonstrance by the officiating priest, with two attendants, and carried under a canopy, which was supported by four young men in civilian attire—the tribute of the world to the triumph of the Lord.

Harry was ravished at the sight; the bells rang a peal of delight in his soul; the spectacle poured in through his eyes. He fixed them on Charlie, who came swinging a censer and throwing clouds of incense directly in front of the Blessed Sacrament. It would seem that in Harry's whole make there was no alloy of the base metal, envy; he was pure gold, although for a long time he had been tarnished. When he beheld his friend, he thought there was nothing so fine, so befitting, so ennobling, as the function Charlie was then performing in the face of the Lord, and the way he was discharging it. He gazed till the object of his admiration had

nearly passed him, and the bell at Harry's side warned him to bow in reverence. He bowed and prayed, and he cried for mercy in the depth of his heart, so that his breast heaved with emotion, and the violence of it brought a sudden gush of blood to his mouth. He tried to conceal his distress, but his mother observed it, and rising quickly, moved with him out of church.

In a few minutes he was set down safely at home; and once arrived there, a copious hemorrhage from the lungs, and complete exhaustion, prostrated him on his bed. His mother sat woe-stricken beside him, and, all comfortless as she herself was, tried to give comfort as a mother knows how. But he said:

"Mother, dear mother,"—and he clasped her hands convulsively,—“we must part.”

The mother sobbed aloud and pressed the wasted hands to her lips.

“Mother, I want the last sacraments.”

“O my boy,” she cried, “my darling boy!”

“Mother,” he said, “long ago did I make my peace with God, and you have been the angel of my penance. My great sorrow for your griefs made me very sorry for offending God. I trust He has forgiven me—as you have.”

"Oh, I have Harry—a thousand times I have; and He much more! Oh, how like yourself you are, my own noble boy—and now to lose you!"

"Come, mother, we shall never lose one another more. In eternity I shall make up for what I have done in time. Kiss me, mother."

"Dearest Henry!"

"A priest, to bring our Lord and near my confession—Charlie too."

The mother sent a message and returned, bidding him be at ease.

"Thank you," he said. "Oh, mother, how my heart cleaves to you as I never felt it before; and you make it cling to God too."

"He loves you much more than I, my son."

"I hope He heard my prayer to-day."

"What was it?"

"I prayed to live, to repay Him."

"You will repay Him, if you live and die wholly in His hands."

"Give me your hand, mother." He kissed it saying: "Blessed hand of my mother, that has brought me to a happy death! Pray with me, mother."

He broke the silence with the reflection:

"A happy death? Yes, but not with the happiness of earlier days."

"Why reflect on those things, Henry?"

"I cannot help it, mother; I am not what I was in those times."

"Let us enjoy our present peace, son, and not wake up such saddening reflections."

"Oh, my present peace is in such contrast with the sad past, which promised no such future as this!"

"Could you be happier, son? You will receive what you asked for. Do you desire more?"

"Nothing, mother; I desire nothing. But I regret much—empty years—empty as my vacant mind during the years I strayed. Nothing in store, save my tears. Nothing in my hand but a broken heart!"

"Why so, when I love you so much?"

"You love me so much, that I see what I did, mother. You love me so much that I see how God loved me."

The mother was bathed in tears.

"I was not so in my earlier years when I lived a full life—full hours, full days, full years; I studied, I said my prayers, and frequently I made aspirations to God."

"What else are you doing now, son, ever since you returned?"

"Yes, mother, but how rich and green was my promise then, if this dry stick of a broken-down spirit can do so now. Then, my thoughts and desires kept festive days before God always; now, I feast on the remains. Reflections are my food; and, if I lived twenty years to come, I should still be what I am,—a break-down and a failure posted up anew."





XXII.

THE LAST HOUR OF THE WANDERER.

THE priest came within an hour, and he was left alone with the dying youth. When the confession was over, the mother was called in, and she entered the room accompanied by Mrs. Desmond, Charles, the uncle, and soon followed by Edward Desmond and other friends or domestics.

A table was covered with a spotless white cloth; a crucifix was set erect in the middle, and two wax candles lighted. Then the Father drew from his bosom the sacred burden of the Lord's Body, which he bore there; and all prostrated themselves on their knees.

Henry lay dressed upon his bed; a light coverlet was spread over him. Exhaustion was depicted on his countenance, and his closed eyelids, through which the tears still streamed, gave a death-like composure to his features. The priest bestowed the bless-

ing, and standing erect beside the prostrate form, prayed that the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ might guard his soul into everlasting life; and while the invalid raised himself a little, and opened his mouth, the minister of God placed upon his tongue the Viaticum, his food for the journey to life everlasting. The rest who were present knelt and prayed, and many wept.

Then came the anointing; and it applied, with blessing upon blessing, the fountains of the Saviour's grace to each member which had wandered, and every part that ailed; and thus again the prayers of the just were poured forth on the sick man, and, for the twentieth time, were his sins forgiven him.

The priest withdrew, and the friends gathered around. Edward, too, clasped the dying youth's hand. The latter smiled faintly, and requested all to be seated. They did so, and spoke, in low tones, words of comfort to him and among themselves. But the end had not yet come. He revived after the reception of the Sacraments, and talked briefly, but cheerily; so that, when an hour had elapsed, friends took leave of him for a time and returned home.

Days passed, their monotony being relieved

by frequent visits, till the ninth day after Corpus Christi. It was Friday, and early in the morning a message came to Charles that Harry was not expected to hold out long. Charles and his mother visited him forthwith, and a glance convinced them that they must expect a speedy dissolution; the doctor despaired of three hours of life.

Charles took his friend's hand. "Harry," he said, gently and sweetly, "the holy sacrifice of the Mass is now being offered up to God for you."

"Thank God!" murmured the youth. "Who will take charge of me hence? Whose feast is it?"

"The feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

"Indeed! Mother!" he exclaimed, with a sudden flash of energy, "it is the feast of the Sacred Heart, and Mass is now being offered for me!"

"Yes, Harry," replied Mrs. Markman, calmly, "all that can be done in heaven or on earth is now being done."

"Mother, did you not devote me to the Sacred Heart?"

"Yes, my son; in my watchings and prayers of five years, you were the charge of the Sacred Heart."

"Has It not granted everything?"

"It has, Henry, except what yet remains, when It takes you to Itself."

The youth kissed the crucifix which he held; he kissed the open side of the Lord; he repeated his acts of reverence and love. Charles whispered as he did so: "In Thee, my God, and for Thee, and from Thee, and with Thee; in the most Sacred Hearts of Jesus and of Mary." Henry answered, "Amen." He turned and said:

"Charles, live and finish what I have never begun"—he spoke with difficulty—"your life, your life of perfection—the sight of you renewed me. The thought of myself has filled me with bitterness. But never such peace, since the days of my purity, as in the bitterness of repentance. Yet never could I be henceforth what you are and must be. Charles, give me your hand; pray for me." He wanted to kiss his friend's hand, but Charles, weeping and blushing, kissed his.

"Mother"—she stood beside his bed—"Charles shall live to repay his mother's love. To repay yours, I die on this day of the Sacred Heart. Edward, your hand; God bless you! Pray for wandering, erring me!"

This salute of love was like a sword driven

right through Edward's breast. There had been much to prey on him of late, much to sober him. He had now been faithful to the call of attending on his dying friend, to whose untimely ruin he had contributed so much. And now his fidelity to the call of friendship was rewarded with a moving call of grace. For the first time within years of Charlie's recollection, two tears stood in Edward's eyes and rolled down his cheeks, as he approached and stood beside the dying boy. He said:

"Henry, I have never asked your pardon for the evil I did you. I beg now, grant me your forgiveness."

"My heartfelt love, Edward, for all the affection you ever bore me; no blame to any one except myself; if there were, I forgive, I forgive, from the bottom of my heart—as I hope to be forgiven." Uncle Desmond just then stood by; Henry addressed him: "Uncle, the sailor-boy is on the last voyage. Good-bye; you were very, very kind."

The uncle pressed the boy's hand in both of his. But these scenes were moments of labor and exhaustion; he spoke with great difficulty, and now he fairly sank. His countenance changed. The priest arriving recited

the prayers for the agonizing; they were responded to by all kneeling. Half an hour elapsed so. The mother caught every breath as she knelt beside her son; then he put out his hand, which she clasped; with the other he moved the crucifix to his face, and so doing, the hand and crucifix fell motionless, and Harry Markman was no more!





XXIII.

THE FACE OF DEATH.

THE day of Harry Markman's death was Friday, the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He died at the hour when the Holy Sacrifice was being offered up to Heaven, for his happy departure from earth. The mother's grief had already been softened, its edge taken off, by her deep-seated resignation to the adorable will of God. But, of course, the moment of his actual departure opened the wounds of her heart afresh. The heart is a tender member, which does not reason; it only feels.

The corpse was laid out. Friends visited in numbers, and poured forth their prayers over the mortal remains of Henry Markman. May he rest in peace!

The long, long day dragged out its weary existence, and the night-tapers shed their

watchful light,—the last watch over the dead. Morning dawned. The coffin was borne to the Church, and deposited before the high altar. Everything in this last act was full of meaning; the body was laid so that the feet were turned towards the sanctuary. This meant that the departed one was not a priest; it meant that the deceased had not the altar for his glory and his crown; but the mother, fortunately, was not alive to the meaning of the ceremony, and she was spared this one pang of memory—this recollection of those better days, when the light of hope shone over the boy's head, and she thought he would stand by her death-bed, to minister with his anointed hands in her own last journey from earth. She was now spared this pang of memory.

The mourners occupied the seats to the right and left of the bier. There was the family of the Desmonds; Edward in company with Galveston; many friends, and a large concourse of the faithful. The Mass for the dead was celebrated; and the choir chanted and the organ swelled through the arches of the church, with "*Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine*"—through the same aisles in which, ten days before, Henry had been rapt

in admiration and devotion during the procession of Corpus Christi.

The Mass was finished. The priest put on a black cope. A cross-bearer proceeded from the sanctuary to the bier. He was attended by two acolytes, vested in cassock and surplice, and bearing lighted torches. These two were Charles and James. There followed them a line of twice twelve youths, similarly vested, and with lighted torches in their hands. The cross-bearer took his stand at the head of the corpse, with his two attendants, one at each side of him. Twelve acolytes ranged themselves to the right of the bier; twelve to the left. At the foot, two large chandeliers were filled with lighted torches; and, between them, the priest, in black cope, with his assistants, began to pronounce the supplications of the Church over the dead, and to beseech the Eternal Father in behalf of His servant, Henry. And when the canticle of death and judgment had been chanted:—"That day, the day of wrath, of calamity and misery, the great day and exceeding bitter, when Thou shalt come to judge the world by fire"—the officiating priest walked around the bier, purifying it with holy water; and around again, throwing

clouds of incense over the departed in Christ —“whom Thou hast ordered, this day, to depart this life.”

He mounted the altar-steps and began to speak. He dilated in the sense of those words: “Who will give me to be as I was in months past, in the days when God preserved me, when His lamp shone over my head, and by His light I walked through the darkness? as I was in the days of my youth, when God was secretly within my tabernacle? I put on justice; and I clothed me with judgment, as with a robe and a diadem. I was an eye to the blind and feet to the lame. I was the father of the poor. And I said: I shall die in my nest, and, like a palm tree, I shall multiply my days. . . But now, I am reduced to nothingness; my desires Thou hast swept away like the wind; and my welfare hath passed away like a cloud. And now, my soul is dried up within me, and the days of affliction possess me. By night, my bone is pierced with pains; and they, who devour me, take no rest. I am likened to the mire, and become as dust and ashes.”

In silence unbroken, the congregation listened. Charles and James were not tearless. The youths, in black cassock and white

surplice, who stood around the bier, were moved, and on the cheeks of many, fresh with the bloom and hue of life, tears now were coursing silently; and the only sound to break the stillness, beside the preacher's voice, was a short cough, now and then, from one or other of the boys, rather to stifle their emotion, than from any other cause.

But Edward's whole soul was stirred; his heart was tossed about as on many waters. The words of the preacher swayed his feelings to and fro, as he had never experienced before. It was a voice from the tomb that rung in the ears of the living; and, under the impulse of the moment, as the acolytes withdrew, Edward stepped out and approached the bier. Other friends gathered around; and, as his hand was on the coffin to move the lid, his wish was anticipated. The portion which covered the corpse's head was turned back, for a last view.

Markman's face was uncovered. The pale cheeks were deeply sunk and attenuated. About the mouth and lips there was a repose, as of one at peace at last,—as of one who sleepeth. And the dark rings, around the closed eyes, seemed to speak of tears shed in plenty, of sorrow very great; and

the calm open brow, on which years had made no wrinkle, spoke of a repentance and a confidence not spent in vain. The beholders felt not like mourners who have no hope.

On the pillow of the dead youth rested a beautiful rose, which Emily had placed there; it was just beginning to fade. But its rich fragrance still lingered. Edward bent over the face of death. The strong man was overcome. He fairly wept; and the tear-drops fell upon the bier.

Galveston stood beside him, and, observing his emotion, quietly took his hand and moved back into the pew. The two knelt, and the tears flowed fast down Edward's cheeks. He buried his face in his hands.

Galveston, too, knelt. He had never before felt such a reality of life; he had never experienced such a reality of death. He seemed to awake from a dream, and find everything instinct with life. Church, sanctuary, altar, everything stood around, full of meaning, full of life. Things were not what they had seemed. They had all been semblances before; now they bore on him as realities—truths all around, the truth of some One yonder, inside that tabernacle,

really there, addressing him, speaking to his heart. For the first time in his life, the Blessed Sacrament of the altar stood out as a reality. Religion, like a vision of justice and peace, for the first time appeared vested before him, in garments of truth. The voice of the preacher seemed to ring still in his ears, with the words: "In the HOLY place I ministered before HIM." And Galveston, by education half-a-Catholic, by association half-an-infidel, felt that the ground on which he knelt was holy, and that he was in the real presence of Him who is the God of heaven and of earth.

Edward rose to move out with the procession. Galveston did not stir, but said in a subdued tone: "Excuse me; I would remain here awhile." Edward gave a slight nod, took his hat and gloves, and, joining the funeral procession out of the church, took his seat in the same carriage with his uncle.

Galveston stayed, and he sat down and thought. The good seeds which had been sown in former life, and been fostered in good company of late, were now, in a few brief hours, receiving an extraordinary development. That was a great gift which he had just received,—the grace of realizing,

of touching palpably and being touched by the truths of where he was, and what he was—the mysteries of life and death, and the duties which dawned upon him. But here came upon his mind old vague fears, which had always beset conversion—the terrors of repentance and penance—the Sacraments and self-sacrifice! Still, the spirit of God was busy around him, and moved over the face of the troubled waters in his soul. Angels whispered about him, and suggested thoughts which befitted a man of business in so momentous a crisis: “Ten thousand men and women and children do these things—why not I?” And just as this mighty question of eternal loss or gain was trembling in the balance, lo! a vision of Charlie rose up before him, of virtue, and purity, and innocence, and genius. And James stood at the side of Charles—just as half an hour ago they ministered there, adorned with the snow-white surplice, and with torches of justice in their hands, burning like shining lights in the face of heaven and earth. Galveston’s heart was warmed. And he asked himself—how were they so beautiful, and how did they keep themselves so? And again he remembered the Sacraments, the

fountains of grace and beauty; and, in particular, the Sacrament of the altar, the centre of life in the whole Church—the Eucharist, in which Christ left Himself for the good of souls—*propter homines*. Then he felt he was in presence of the same Holy Eucharist; and he knelt down.

Just then, a person entered the deserted sanctuary, and, passing out, came down by Galveston. It was the sacristan. Our friend signed to him and asked whether any father was at liberty. The words trembled on his lips as he inquired. Oh! It is hard for the bearded man to be born anew! The sacristan answered:

“Yes, sir.”

“Could I see him?” he inquired again.

“Certainly, sir; I will call him.”

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Another soul was won to God'





XXIV

THE PURSUERS PURSUED.

THAT day, after the funeral cortége had returned to the city, and the numerous friends were dispersed, Mrs. Markman consented to the urgent request of the Desmonds, and came to reside for a time with them. Her own house was full of loneliness and sadness.

About three o'clock in the afternoon, the members of the family were seated together. Their consolation and comfort, after the recent depressing scenes, lay in disburdening their minds to one another. Mrs. Desmond showed herself the wise matron, rich in the resources of piety and in the prudence of a Christian mother. Emily could apply the salve of a feeling but buoyant disposition. Uncle Desmond called at the house, and after joining in the party for a little while, begged to withdraw with Edward. The young man said:

"With pleasure, uncle."

They saluted the company and, as they entered an adjoining apartment, the uncle, with a slight smile hovering around his lips, observed:

"My dear Edward, I have settled your business."

"You have? When, uncle? How?"

"Within the last few days; but I deferred informing you, till the last nail was struck on the head; and, moreover, till our departed friend's obsequies were completed."

"Dear uncle," said Edward, with great earnestness, and an expression of lively gratitude on his face, "give me all the particulars."

"In brief, they are these. You must know, in the first place, that I had travelled with those two same ruffians; and, before ever you broached the subject to me, I had heard your name in the mouth of strangers, abroad on the high seas."

"Is that possible, uncle? You never mentioned it."

"No; but I was not, on that account, the less alive to consequences. So I felt happy in gathering an item or two of information, from what I overheard them say in the depot

at New York, and on the cars. They meant to settle down in business, somewhere in the States. With this, and the information you yourself afforded me, of your having been initiated into that society in Paris, on a night when you would seem to have been plied with liquor, and rendered somewhat unconscious of what you were doing, I proceeded to work."

"What measures did you take, uncle?"

"I first called upon our friend, detective Kilben. You know that for ability, there is no man his equal in this part of the country, nor another pair of eyes equal to his. I detailed my design to him; and, taking him as companion, went at once to carry it out. I called at M—'s hotel; and sent up my card to your acquaintances. The waiter brought down word that I was invited up stairs. I declined; I desired to meet them in the coffee-room. You see, I did not care for discussing the business in a private place, lest violence should be attempted. These men are generally armed. To be sure, so was my friend, the detective. But I would have them down; and one of them came. I requested the presence of both. Both appeared, and we sat down together in the

coffee-room. Meanwhile, you may imagine, we had recognized one another, at first glance, as fellow-travellers over the ocean. In answer to their expression of surprise, I observed quietly:

“‘Yes, gentlemen, we have travelled together. And, as you see by my card, my name is Mr. Desmond. Now, without more ado, will you tell me your claims upon Edward Desmond.’

“‘I have his bond,’ observed the dark man.

“‘Let us see the bond and form a judgment upon it,’ said I.

“‘I have shown it to him,’ was the answer, ‘and he acknowledged it.’

“‘I take his place, now,’ said I; ‘let me see it.’

“‘That is impossible, sir,’ he answered, ‘this is a private affair, between Mr. Edward Desmond and ourselves.’

“‘Gentlemen,’ I answered, ‘to make the matter brief, understand a point or two upon this question. Whether Mr. Edward Desmond has reached man’s estate or not, and has a property of his own or not, does not much concern us, after all. For, if the hold you have upon him is not founded on law, but on certain relations which he has con-

tracted with you, know that those relations have no standing in this country.' Here I glanced at our friend, the detective, who had never moved his eyes off one of the couple, but to fix them on the other; and who, by that operation, was evidently causing them no little uneasiness. I continued: 'If your claims upon him are only to further your own private business purposes in the States, where I know you are going to settle,'—at this they started—'our friend and I are both of us well acquainted with every nook and corner in the business parts of this country, and with every title you can put forward on Edward's property.'

"The detective, meanwhile, had not uttered a single word; he merely looked at them.

"I continued: 'Gentlemen, I am here to answer any reasonable demand. Make it, and you shall be satisfied.'

"'My demands,' said one of them, pretty fiercely, 'are on Edward Desmond!'

"'Then, sir,' I answered sternly, 'your demands are as good as none!'

"'We shall see that!' the taller one of the couple answered; it was the first time he spoke. He was going on to say something more, when Kilben rose to his feet. You

know, Edward, what a tall, powerful man he is, with a ferocious black beard. He rose up and said to me:

“ ‘Mr. Desmond, let us suspend this meeting.’

“I was reluctant to do so. He took me by the arm and led me out of the room. But I had observed the effect of his words on the two men. The taller had something on his lips to say, but it died away; and the small, dark man looked pale. No sooner were we out of the room, with the door closed behind us, than Kilben said:

“ ‘I know these two men well. Twelve years ago they were guilty of embezzlement in a New York bank, and ran away. Now, Mr. Desmond, I can do one of two things for you—either take measures to convict them, or frighten them out of this country; for they will be ready to go at double-quick, when they see they are recognized.’

“ ‘Is that so!’ I exclaimed in astonishment.

“ ‘Which shall I do?’ he asked.

“ ‘Oh! do what you like, so that Edward is safe.’

“ ‘Well,’ he answered, ‘I will let you know soon.’

“We parted. But I saw, as he entered the

room again, that the two men had already decamped and disappeared. Kilben followed. This was three days ago. I have not seen him since. But half an hour ago, I received a telegram from him. He says that they took to flight; he pursued; they never stopped, till, reaching New York, they embarked, this very morning, in the steamer *Arabia*. They are now on the ocean. So there is an end of your affair; the last nail has been driven in. I shall reward Kilben richly."

"Thanks, uncle, thanks—thanks!"

"Make good your thanks, son, with good deeds—with something more than words."

"What shall I do? I am ready—entirely ready;" and the flush of enthusiasm mounted the young man's cheeks.

"Will you bear the burden of my whole office?" returned Mr. Desmond. "I am getting old. It does not befit me now, to leave my fireside and go travelling, as if the young blood were coursing in my veins. I rejoice no longer in the excitement of business. And when last I returned from Europe, my good lady insisted that I should not leave her again; for, in spite of her confidence in St. Joseph, in spite of the wax-candles she ever keeps burning for my safe return, she

fears and dreads the risks I run on land and sea. I did half promise her not to go away again. You can supply the other half."

"It is too great an honor you do me, uncle, to think me worthy of succeeding you."

"Worthy you are, son. And if you find yourself coming short of the standard, you have not far to go for a sample and a model of how youth and virtue can go hand-in-hand, and what they can effect."

"You are referring to Charlie, uncle?"

"I am."

"Well, I will confess he has worked a revolution in me."

Shortly afterwards, that same evening, Edward took his hat and went out alone; and he, too, was seen amid the throng of penitents in the church. He unravelled from the beginning the twisted thread of his life; and purposed, and began to keep his purpose of weaving it over anew!

And, in that spirit it was that, on the following morning, he approached the Holy Table, for the first time in a long space. And, at another Mass, Galveston, too, was remarked drawing in like manner from the same fount of grace, and strength, and beauty.



XXV.

CONCLUSION.

“WHO is coming now?” asked Edward. He directed Emily’s attention to a carriage, which was turning a corner of the road.

They were at home, seated on the porch, and part of a goodly company gathered there. They were celebrating a great occasion. On the evening before, Charlie’s career as a school-boy had come to a happy end. He had appeared on the public stage, had delivered in the name of his class a valedictory address, paying a final tribute to the college, his *alma mater*; and he had become a graduate. Certainly, his appearance was a great success; his reception by the crowded audience highly gratifying. He now formed one of the company, under the flowering vines of the porch; and, though he were more at ease had the topic of conversation been something else than his own success,

still, to all appearance, he was perfectly self-possessed, and behaved like a polished young gentleman.

A carriage was driving up to the gate. Charlie thought it was Mr. Lambeth and family. Mr. Galveston was more correct in pronouncing it to be Mr. Desmond and lady, to both of whom he had recently been introduced by Edward.

They came down the stone steps and proceeded over the lawn to meet the visitors. The day was a charming one at the end of June, ten days after Henry, the friend of Charles and the long-lost treasure of Mrs. Markman, had blissfully departed to a better life. He was not forgotten; yet Charlie could not feel sad to-day; for the life of his friend, though sad in its details, was like a melody which ended sweetly. It soothed his recollections and softened the tone of his feelings, as he walked across the sun-lit path, under the beech-trees; and he beheld the reflection of the golden light on the beautiful waters of the valley beneath; and glancing up the green slope and verdant hills beyond, to the azure sky above, which bore here and there a satin-like cloud bathing in the sunlight, he felt his heart light within him. His

present was as fragrant as the air around him; and his future, which opened indefinitely before him, unfolded in colors brighter and fresher, till in the distance it faded away.

They greeted the arrivals. The uncle accosted Charles:

"A long-expected day come at last, my boy! Your school-days been long enough, eh?"

Mr. Galveston observed: "Even were they longer, he could scarcely have made of them more than he has."

"I am satisfied," responded the youth modestly.

They moved towards the house.

Meanwhile, upon the porch, Mrs. Markman, who, though in her weeds of bereavement and mourning, had assumed the cheerful air, so elegant and so natural to her, of congratulating the happy, was conversing with Mrs. Desmond. The latter said:

"I cannot gainsay that he is a worthy subject of felicitation. Yet, do you know, I feared—I feared"—

"What gave you reason to fear?"

"Three months ago, he seemed to be changing, as the bright face of day under a cloud. So near the end of his boyhood; and

yet, if anything happened to mar the beauty of his soul, so far would he be from what I hoped and prayed for. My heart fluttered, as I observed him losing his steadiness of manner; and, in place of it, there was coming—I don't know how to describe it. Still, I hoped that his path would end as it had begun."

"And surely so it has," rejoined Mrs. Markman.

"And so it has. And I thank you for your felicitation. Moreover"—she lowered her voice—"much has been done which I dared but vaguely hope for Edward is changed, is he not?"

Mrs. Markman answered with a nod of satisfaction, as she resumed: "Thank God, my dear lady, for the good things He has given you. But one thing in Charles' conduct has specially attracted my notice. He is now old enough for his heart and affections to develop, to move about and to settle; to cause emotions and disturbance, as passions always do, at the time they awake. Yet he does not seem to have suffered. My own dear departed one"—the tears stood in her eyes, and, by sympathy, Mrs. Desmond was affected—"had sad experience and suffered,

as you know." She paused a moment. "But all is well now, thanks to the goodness of the Sacred Heart, in whose keeping he ever was. Charles has steered through and is safe."

The party on the lawn approached. Uncle said:

"What a sombre, sober view you take of life, Charlie!"

"Oh, no! not at all, uncle;" and a beaming smile played over his features, as he stood a moment, and his eye wandered back over the fair prospect of land and water. He brought his glance back to his uncle, who was surveying and admiring him, and he said:

"A purpose, an occupation, a work to do and conscientiously done, will brighten the dullest side of the darkest day, and will make the brighter side brilliant. Here's Emily"—

"What are you saying of me, master Charles?" answered his sister to the mention of her name.

"I am just remarking, Emmy, that you don't care for seeing the outside of the house. One would say yours was the dullest life in creation."

"Oh!"—she deprecated the term—"don't say so!"

"Nor do I say so; for, somehow or other, you are always so busy, you find so much to do, that you are as lively as a cricket, as merry as a lark, and as happy as I'd wish my sister to be."

"Thank you, master Charles!" she courtiesied complacently to him; "you have a sweet tongue."

"Don't call me master, Emmy," he said, as he stooped over a bush and plucked a beautiful rose. He presented it. She accepted it, and answered:

"Don't call you master? What was that parchment and great red ribbon and seal I beheld you receiving last night? Thank you! Your success seems to blush in this fragrant rose." And she tripped away to the ladies.

The whole company, though not yet complete, gathered together; and Charles took a seat by the side of Mrs. Markman. The lady said to him:

"How much we should like to know what you mean to do with yourself."

"My mother," he answered, "has, I think, some secret design on me,"

"No, indeed, son," replied Mrs. Desmond; "my design I'll publish to the world."

"Then tell us, mother."

The lady paused. Emily playfully put in: "Mamma, Charlie is laughing. He knows well enough, himself."

He answered: "Emmy, I know what you would have me do."

"What's that?" she asked quickly, with a degree of excited curiosity.

"Hold wool for you to roll!" They laughed; she shook her little head at him.

Galveston said: "Your uncle, Charlie, would, I surmise, be rejoiced with your presence in his office, to keep you in talk and himself in spirits."

"Most assuredly," said the uncle, "in talk and in spirits; but as to my office, Edward now must answer that."

"And I," subjoined Edward, affectionately, "would, if I could, have you always with me, my own dear brother;" he pressed Charlie's hand. "But will you let me?"

"Ah! more than one has a say in that matter," remarked Mrs. Desmond; "James will claim a hearing, no less than any one."

"At all events," said the uncle, "wherever you are, it is clear from the signs around

you, that you will never want company, nor union, nor strength. This is evidently, Charles, a privilege of your being and your character. I could not wish you a more happy trait than to be always lending and always borrowing your strength, in union and society."

"Now, uncle," answered the youth brightly, "you remind me of those words:

'Man, like the generous vine, supported lives:

The strength he gains is from the embrace he gives.'"

"That is my idea, Charles."

"Well, mother, tell us your design about Charlie," said Emily.

"Oh! it is already well known. My care for you, son, has made it clearer than words can say. You see, I have put in your way every chance of enlightening your mind, by learning and accomplishment; and I have industriously sought for your youthful will and tender heart, the genial air of good company; and I have encouraged it in the way of Christian devotion. That done, it only remains that I hope for the result I have ever desired: continue as you have grown, and now begin the work which devolves upon you."

"Specify that, madam," said the uncle.

"I cannot," she answered; "it is not for me, but for God alone to determine the line of life, the profession, vocation. My work has been to help from without, to place the conditions for him to choose his course well. The finger of God is his guide; and a young mind purified, and a young will rightly bent, can easily distinguish and obey the direction of such a guide."

Mr. Galveston whispered to Emily: "That reminds me of what Charlie styled cultivating the Kingly Image within us. Do you remember that beautiful talk of his about the Kingly Image and the Finger of God?"

"Remember it! and the way he spoke of my playing on the piano, when my fingers were cold; indeed I do! So, mamma," exclaimed the young lady, "will you rest satisfied, whatever Charlie will do with himself? I don't think I will. He has, in his mind's eye, I know, philosophers and great orators, and what not!"

"Not to mention great talkers, here and there," he subjoined with a quiet smile.

She let that slip, and added more calmly: "Well, tell us soon, Charlie, whatever it is;

and don't suffer it to tear you away from us. Here they are!"

Several carriages stopped at the gate. They thronged down to meet the visitors. Charles pressed the hand of James, the friend of his school-boy days. The dinner-bell rang; and amid the perfumes of bouquets of flowers luxuriating in the pride of summer bloom, the whole company moved towards the dining-room, where elegance and richness were alike displayed.

They sat down to a banquet, which, at the same time, formed the last scene of Charles' boyhood, and closed the last act in the play of his youthful free-will.

* * * * *

A brief interval—and the family circle is still intact, save in regard of one. Mrs. Desmond, Mrs. Markman, and Emily are the centre of the domestic circle. Edward and Galveston are its representatives and supports in the face of the world—each high in standing and united in interests. James, who has already advanced in his profession, is a constant visitor of the family; evidently his affections have found a place. And the uncle reclines in the retirement of his own

hearth. Charles alone does not press the threshold. His profession will have him elsewhere, in spite of Emily's protest; and, before the light of day has closed upon his eyes, it may carry him far away. But it is the privilege of a high profession to make large demands on natural ties, and heavy exactions on the funds of the heart. For returns are made a hundred-fold.



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